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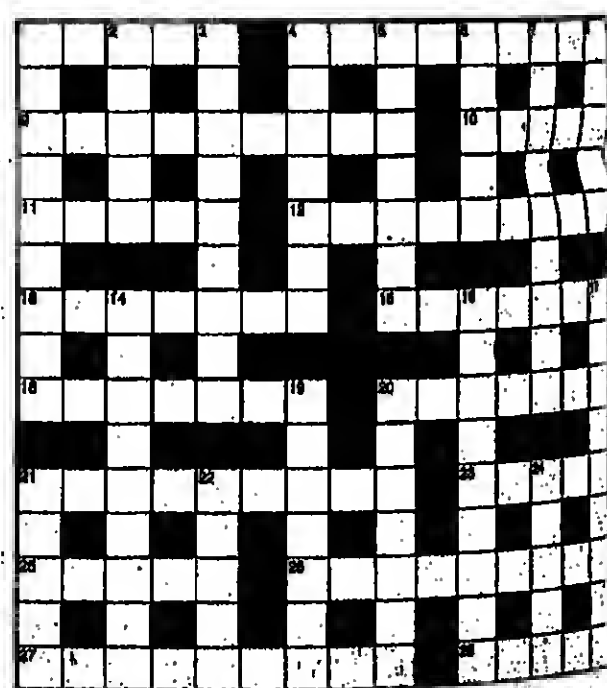
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TLS Crossword No 15

A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct solution opened on December 9. Answers should be addressed to TLS Crossword, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. Entries were received for Crossword No 14; of five correct ones the first opened was submitted by Mr W. Broady, 39 Cornhill Crescent, Balldon, Shipley, West Yorkshire.



Across

- 1 Poetic street that witnessed damage to a handbag. (5)
- 4 Eau and son rank up to the US. (7)
- 5 Feminist rewriting of Macbeth. (10)
- 6 Parvly watch Carry on James. (10)
- 7 Did Bloom discover someone's son of similarity between two respective like and unlike. (10)
- 8 Reproduction of the 16th century. (10)
- 9 Musicalist might dully around in May '45. (5)
- 10 Singular spirit that walked again in Rosewood. (5)
- 11 Dramatist for a cello society, a play school, or that MP of ours. (9)
- 12 Reluctant, as Nick's Honey often does. (5,2)
- 13 Paraphrased comment on the record player. (7)
- 14 I found / In Lancelotti? (Tenyson) (7)
- 15 Agnour's sailor, heard to fall between deep and even. (7)
- 16 Choose that blusocking, the lady of Troy. (9)
- 17 Can't I toss the hay? That's novel. (5)
- 18 Promiscuous as Time's proprietor, we hear. (3)
- 19 Melodist used to discover the crime of Orestes and Paul Morol. (9)
- 20 Positive who could head Desert wild. (6)
- 21 Can't I toss the hay? That's novel. (5)

Down

- 1 Holly the Voyagers says Dargue. (9)
- 2 Post get his middle name from the wife of Signor Mord. (7)
- 3 Wait Tasso, about the Monk's favourite dish. (5,4)
- 4 One that Jarris among others springs. (6,7)

- 5 Lawrunlon gamekeeper Boden and Miss Lee's rather astrophysics. (10)
- 6 Father figure to the 19th century. (10)
- 7 Feminist rewriting of Macbeth. (10)
- 8 Parvly watch Carry on James. (10)
- 9 Did Bloom discover someone's son of similarity between two respective like and unlike. (10)
- 10 Reproduction of the 16th century. (10)
- 11 Musicalist might dully around in May '45. (5)
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Solution to Crossword No 14
Across: 1. Holly the Voyagers says Dargue. (9) 2. Post get his middle name from the wife of Signor Mord. (7) 3. Wait Tasso, about the Monk's favourite dish. (5,4) 4. One that Jarris among others springs. (6,7)

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TLS

The Times Literary Supplement

FRIDAY 2 DECEMBER 1983 No 4,209 60p

Anthony Quinton: Martin Gardner, sceptical fideist

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"Double Portrait" by Lorenzo Lotto, from the State Hermitage Museum, Leningrad, on show at The Gallery of Venice 1600-1609 exhibition at the Royal Academy until March 11, 1984.

The art of exposure

Anthony Quinton

MARTIN GARDNER

The *Ways of a Philosophical Scrivener*
453pp. Brighton: Harvester Press. £12.95.
07108 06760
Order and Surprise
396pp. New York: Prometheus Books. \$19.95.
087975 219 X

For twenty-five years, until he recently lured the job over to Douglas Hofstadter, author of *Gödel, Escher, Bach*, Martin Gardner contributed a sizeable column every month to the *Scientific American* called "Mathematical Games", a constant flow of puzzles, tricks and jokes, ranging from mere verbal riddles to the more objectionable features of the institutionalized belief-systems it is at war with, much as those at war with Germans get more and more like the Germans as the war goes on. A familiar type of anti-religious zealot shows all the enraged exclusiveness and sleepless vigilance about trivialities of a member of some extreme Protestant sect.

The great "rationalists", in this popular sense, generally managed to retain their senses of humour, or, at any rate, senses of proportion, so that their indignation was reserved for the real abominations that deserved it, while mere absurdities were put in their place with mockery. Gardner's style of operation is in the tradition of Erasmus and Voltaire. He does get indignant from time to time. But he reminds himself and us that most of the nonsense he criticizes is comparatively harmless, or, at least, does no direct harm to those taken in by it and simply contributes to a general enhancement of feeble-mindedness. Only health fads or medical fads do direct harm, and he adds, the sort of pseudo anthropology that nourishes racism.

He also favours a satirical mode of criticism because he believes it is more effective in breaching the hold of pseudoscience on its victims. In *The Ways of a Philosophical Scrivener* he even says "no one is ever convinced by logic of anything important". This melancholy doctrine is both excessive and barely compellible with the major part of Gardner's life-work. Of course non-logical factors are often needed to get people to attend to the logic of a case where, nevertheless, it is the logic that, in the end, carries conviction. That fact is typically concealed by perhaps quite sincere refusal, in the excited circumstances of argument, of the

Bogus (1981), a slightly more free-ranging collection and thirty-eight pieces, many of them retracing ground already explored, but taking up rubbish oozing minted in the interval, most conspicuously the metal-bending tricks of Uri Geller.

The vigorous arraignment of folly is a most important work of intellectual public hygiene, pursued between one age of belief and another by Erasmus, Voltaire and other members of the positivist pantheon. It is a good thing that those capable of rationally critical thinking should abandon the mutual incivilities of scholars for a period of community work now and then. The defence of reason has an intelligible tendency to include, even to become identified with, the criticism of traditional religion. When it does there is danger of its taking on some of the more objectionable features of the institutionalized belief-systems it is at war with, much as those at war with Germans get more and more like the Germans as the war goes on. A familiar type of anti-religious zealot shows all the enraged exclusiveness and sleepless vigilance about trivialities of a member of some extreme Protestant sect.

The great "rationalists", in this popular sense, generally managed to retain their senses of humour, or, at any rate, senses of proportion, so that their indignation was reserved for the real abominations that deserved it, while mere absurdities were put in their place with mockery. Gardner's style of operation is in the tradition of Erasmus and Voltaire. He does get indignant from time to time. But he reminds himself and us that most of the nonsense he criticizes is comparatively harmless, or, at least, does no direct harm to those taken in by it and simply contributes to a general enhancement of feeble-mindedness. Only health fads or medical fads do direct harm, and he adds, the sort of pseudo anthropology that nourishes racism.

He also favours a satirical mode of criticism because he believes it is more effective in breaching the hold of pseudoscience on its victims. In *The Ways of a Philosophical Scrivener* he even says "no one is ever convinced by logic of anything important". This melancholy doctrine is both excessive and barely compellible with the major part of Gardner's life-work. Of course non-logical factors are often needed to get people to attend to the logic of a case where, nevertheless, it is the logic that, in the end, carries conviction. That fact is typically concealed by perhaps quite sincere refusal, in the excited circumstances of argument, of the

worst party to admit defeat. Time is needed to reconcile us to our intellectual duties.

As for the conflict between this pessimism about human rationality and Gardner's own career: he cannot think it enough to expel false belief from his readers' heads by any old rhetorical device. Unless they understand why the belief was false, which is what acknowledging the logical case against it consists in, they are as vulnerable as they were before to any fresh purveyor of tosh who comes along. Perhaps Gardner's remark merely expresses momentary exasperation with the enthusiasm people have for being taken in.

In the actual practice of his art of exposure Gardner is indeed for the most part entertainingly satirical in a way that secures a reader's attention, while being less calculated to evoke resistance to the logical points he is making than some more comminatory mode of expression would be. His treatment of metal-bending is exemplary. It is initially more reasonable to suppose that Geller's spoons are a conjuring trick than that the fundamental laws of physics need levish modification. If metal-benders resist the controls that conjurers devise for the detection of imposture and, where they fail to do so, are caught out, the conjuring explanation of the "phenomena" is strongly confirmed. It is entirely rational of him to go on to argue that the endorsement of the genuineness of metal-bending by highly qualified physicists is really neither here nor there. A knowledge of physical science is not a good qualification for the detection of a conjurer's fraud.

Gardner's most notable work, then, has been as a rationalistic critic of various forms of modern scientific unorthodoxy which he contends, with an abundance of reasons for doing so, are really pseudoscience – in some cases fraudulent, partly or wholly, in others sincere illusion. Now, by and large, unorthodox science or "parascience", to stick to labels that do not beg the question to its disadvantage, is antimaterialist and congenial to supernaturalism. Velikovsky's speculations about Venus being the result of a comet's collision with Jupiter, astronomically in the very recent past, is used to underwrite various mythical-looking bits of the Old Testament: the Flood and the sun standing still for Joshua, for instance.

It is this that constitutes the natural affinity I mentioned earlier between the criticism of pseudoscience and the criticism of religion by secular rationalism in general. Because of this

connection it is tempting to locate Gardner in a tradition of pertinacious atheists which was firmly established in the mid-nineteenth century and has been kept alive since then with the help of C. A. Watts and Co. The Thinkers Library and the Rationalist Press. That is the world of T. H. Huxley and W. K. Clifford, of Winwood Reade and Bradlaugh, of J. M. Robertson and A. W. Benn, of Fisher's *Our New Religion* and of Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe*.

In view of that link it is at first odd to find that the leading unmasker of pseudoscience of our age should turn out to be, and for a long time to have been, a believer in a personal God and in human immortality. But that is what we learn from *The Ways of a Philosophical Scrivener*. More than half the book is devoted to religious topics. It begins with a longish section in which a commonsensical philosophy in the narrower sense of the word – covering the external world, truth, science, beauty, moral goodness and free will – is set out, in, it must be admitted, a fairly soft-edged, commonplace way. Half as much again, fifty pages, contains Gardner's social doctrine, defending a moderate democratic socialism against adherents of Adam Smith in one direction and of Karl Marx in the other. In them H. G. Wells's "open conspiracy" of the scientifically informed and public-spirited is invoked after long years of neglect, the historical disappointments of the intervening years revealing themselves in a complete absence of Wellian bumptiousness.

But the final two hundred pages on religious topics are the real meat of the book. In the first of the chapters on religion Gardner's claims for his theology are watered down and criticism put on the defensive, like a man in a dinner-jacket at a barbecue, by the remark "this book is little more than a slovenly summary of my preferences". Not quite the thing for the dust-jacket. And, of course, it is more, both in aim and achievement.

To take some achievements first: Gardner argues well against the evasive habit of people who have no inclination whatever to believe that God exists of calling themselves agnostics. This is, in most cases, little euphemism, like describing a lunatic as having a personality disorder. He regards polytheism as a live option and argues persuasively that there is a good deal of it in Christianity, especially Roman Catholic Christianity with its cult of the Virgin Mary and its saints. He is very much alert to the modern Protestant fashion of

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evacuating the word "God" of all its traditional significance by flabby redefinitions such as Tillich's. He rejects the God of pantheism as he does the God of deism as too abstract and impersonal to satisfy the needs of the believer.

Having specified fairly clearly what sort of God he wants to believe in—one who is unique and personal, but not too anthropomorphically conceived—he goes on to admit that the standard proofs are no good and proclaims himself a fideist, ready to make the leap of faith. He admits that reason and experience are against God and immortality. But, taking a personal God to be one who confers immortality, he can do no more than acknowledge an "ineradicable desire to continue to exist". William James, who crops up quite a lot in the book, is drawn on here for his idea that religious belief, dealing as it does with matters beyond the reach of empirical testing, must be verified by its emotional satisfyingness. Garliner sees this as a generalization of Pascal's wager. Since one will no longer exist after bodily death if one is mistaken in believing in God and immortality, one has nothing to lose if one is wrong and much to gain, by comfort now and perhaps reward hereafter, if one is right.

Once he has made his leap Gardner goes on in a breezily experimental spirit to consider its consequences. A problematic one is that of reconciling God's existence with the fact of evil, moral and physical. He has no time for trickery about evil as non-being. He wonders whether God may not be inwardly divided or still in process of development. But anything that amounts to treating God as finite he regards as unacceptable and he concludes that, while believing that God's existence is consistent with evil, we cannot know how it is. God must be hidden, for if belief is irresistible it does not follow from love.

In three chapters on immortality he says very firmly that he anyway is not resigned to extinction and he takes leave to doubt the sincerity of any rate self-knowledge of those who say they are resigned to it. He will put up with no substitutes: living in the memory of others, in one's works, in the eternity of the present moment. After various familiar manoeuvres in the field of working out a reasonably definite conception of what sort of thing an afterlife could be, he opts for some kind of re-embodiment, agreeing with Aristotle that the soul is the form of the body and so cannot really exist except as manifested by it.

I observed earlier that there was a tension between Gardner the hammer of pseudo-science and Gardner the believer in a personal God and immortality. It turns out, a decently literal kind. The rationalism of the former does indeed consort oddly with the blatant and unembarrassed fideism of the latter. However he does go further along the traditional path of

Victorian secular rationalism than I have so far explained. Throughout the religious chapters of this book there are strewn unequivocally expressed and extremely disingenuous criticisms of institutional religion and in particular of Christianity, which Gardner plainly regards with the same distaste as any thinker of the good old Thinkers Library.

To start with, there is the objectionable moral character of the God of the Old Testament. Much stress is laid on Numbers 31, in which disgusting atrocities are committed against the Midianites by Moses, acting under divine guidance. The belief in hell is seen as inconsistent with the rule of turning the other cheek. Since Christ believed in hell he is evidently not God. He was also wrong about the time of the Second Coming (Gardner seems not to have met the idea of kenosis). He is equally scornful about the attempts of contemporary Christians to dilute the harsh fluids of traditional orthodoxy. He is, in fact, an extreme religious individualist. The philosophical theist, he says, rejects both revelation and the idea of miraculous divine intervention in the world.

A few chapters earlier, however, in discussing prayer, which he takes to be what essentially distinguishes a non-churchgoing theist from an atheist, he had argued, with apparent seriousness, that perhaps God answers our prayers without interfering with the order of nature by secret alterations, by, for example, exercising control on the colic of waves



Desire's own principles

A. W. Price

TROELS ENGBERG-PEDERSEN
Aristotle's Theory of Moral Insight
291pp. Oxford University Press. £20.
0 19 82466 6

As Stephen Clark has observed: "We must go beyond the text to understand it", where beyond may not mean behind: the aim of philosophical interpretation pursued abstrusely is not to explain the text by ascribing thoughts to its author, but to reanimate the text by making philosophy out of it. To interpret Aristotle so is to practise as an Aristotelian. Yet it is hard to achieve a mean: to depart too far from the text, or to extract nothing new from it, is to fail to bring it to life. There are also temptations in motive: some interpreters seem more concerned to show off their work, others to show off; it is not easy to be both scintillating and selfless.

Troels Engberg-Pedersen takes us his own way through Aristotle's maze: he responds freshly and directly to the text in ways that he wishes to share with us, and persuade us of; he is always concerned to derive clear views, to summon evidence (supplied in an appendix, conflicting), to make sense of chapters as

wholes as well as piecemeal. Perhaps he sometimes tries too hard for originality; but, whether more often persuaded or provoked, the reader is at least never fobbed off with paraphrase or received opinion.

Aristotle's ethics are rather suggestive than definitive (whence, in part, their appeal). Certain fundamental notions, such as happiness and nobility, leave much to our imagination, not a quality lacking here. Happiness, Engberg-Pedersen insists, is the satisfaction at every moment of one's life of one's every desire at the time; he claims this to be "the point of all choice", "the state whose existence is implied in the very notion of choosing", while admitting that its attainment is logically excluded by desires for the future. Nobility becomes, in effect, the principle, applied to the distribution of natural goods, "Everybody to count for one, nobody for more than one" (Benjamin); utilitarian justice becomes the motive of Aristotelian virtue. Both constructs will cause a surprise unalloyed by the evidence offered.

Fortunately, these eccentricities do little to sabotage the main discussion that follows. A major uncertainty, and not only for students of Aristotle, are the respective roles of moral education of the grasp of truth (which Hume assigned to reason), and the directive of desire (or what Hume termed the "passions").

functions on the quantum-mechanical level, which appear to us purely matters of chance.

It was at this point, two-thirds of the way into the book and well into its theological section, that a suspicion which had been growing for some time became explicit, namely that *The Whys of a Philosophical Scrivener* is a late twentieth-century version of Samuel Butler's *The Fair Haven*. That fine work did not bear Butler's name when it first appeared in 1873. It purported to be the papers of an honest doubter, edited after his death by his brother, trying to grapple with the difficulties put in the way of belief by the miraculous element in Christianity. "The late John Pickard Owen" was, of course, an ironical device, but a number of believers were taken in and found the whole thing very edifying until Butler revealed that he was the author.

Those speculative secret tamperings of the deity with wave-function collapses led me to wonder if Gardner was not appearing before us as a kind of J. P. Owen *redivivus*. But he cannot be. He is too straightforward a writer, in his other writings, to carry out such an elaborate, such a voluminous hoax. The non-theological part of the book is too ordinary and wholesome to be conceived as part of such a scheme. The word "scrivener" in the title is comically archaic, like the "anent" and "whilom" and "albeit" of the correspondence column of a local newspaper, but Gardner is culturally at home with writers of an earlier age. He is a great admirer of Chesterton, closer in thought to, but less fond of, H. G. Wells, keen on Lord Dunsany, James Branch Cabell and Alfred Noyes. I have to conclude that his hearty, unapologetic fideism is perfectly genuine. Given that it is, there are two main objections to be made to it. In the first place the philosophical theism (together with belief in immortality and prayer) which Gardner adopts is of a categorical, unsophisticatedly literal character. It is, therefore, a factual hypothesis and answerable to evidence, and not the expression of an attitude to life and the world or something of that non-cognitive sort. Gardner admits that reason and experience are against his religious beliefs. With his idea of what kind of beliefs they are and his general commitment to rationality, it follows that he has no right to believe them.

Secondly, and more particularly, although he is very clear about what precisely he does and does not believe by "God", "immortality" and other terms in his beliefs, he is not clear about fideism. In his bluff, bold way he never really distinguishes it from the grand old human bad habit of believing something you want to believe. But his main work as a critic of pseudoscience has been devoted to the detection and critical punishment of just that habit. Perhaps a case could be made for the view that fideism is all right as regards beliefs about nature as a whole or about what "lies behind"

Once (but not in the *Ethics*) Aristotle declares: "Desire is consequent on opinion rather than opinion on desire; for thinking is the starting-point." But Engberg-Pedersen stresses (as has also Anselm Müller recently) a different, perhaps conflicting, certainly more concrete insight: young men are not going to get any better through reading the *Ethics*. If argument could prove to me that it is corrupt not to act nobly, it might just confirm that I was corrupt. What then is the point of Aristotle's "practical wisdom"?

Engberg-Pedersen's answer is part of a unified account. Desires are really assertions of evaluations; but the evaluations evolve through a process of habituation that leaves their justifications inarticulate. ("Perceptual", which Aristotle sometimes summons as arbiter, is no special intuition, but just the application of implicit principles.) The role of practical wisdom is to articulate the determinants of decision by formulating principles, underpinned by appeal to human nature, that declare can recognize as its own; if these principles refer to happiness in the right way, they will make possible actions done for their own sakes for which the agent is responsible in a distinctively human way.

This seems at first to lend a quite novel force to Hume's slogan: "Reason is the slave of the passions". Practical wisdom becomes a kind of royal figurehead, whose task is to grace decisions made elsewhere. However, this impression may be misleading. I remain uncertain whether Engberg-Pedersen is saying that practical wisdom makes no difference to what is done, or rather (as Hume would agree) that it produces "no genuine change in a man's desires", eg. no new motivations. Moreover, he grants desire a kind of intelligence: its development is not mindless, and involves (we may say), implicit inductive generalization. He counts a desire as "rational" only if its satisfaction can state a universal reason for it (by which criterion many of our actual beliefs, eg. in particular causal sequences, are not rational either); yet right desire contains "no rational knowledge" as a "cognitive" element, and so cannot be a Humean passion, which has no representative function. So he is right not to oppose himself to those who have recently invoked Aristotle as an ally against Hume.

Engberg-Pedersen has ensured, simply by use of a system of reference (to sections within chapters) discarded in all translations known to me, that his book will only be usable to scholars and Oxford undergraduates. But it is a pity that his book is not more widely available.

nature; it is objectionable only in connection with beliefs about what is to be found or going on within nature. Gardner makes no such case and does not seem to see that such a case needs to be made.

Taken as it stands, then, *The Whys of a Philosophical Scrivener* is something of an aberration in the career of someone almost wholly devoted to the rational criticism of engaging beliefs. There is a feature of Gardner's work as a critic of pseudoscience that is worth noticing. He is always so busy dealing rationally with the point at issue and intellectual shortcomings of his victims' work, that he devotes very little time—admirably little time, in many ways—to the motives of those who deceive others and perhaps themselves. He does not suggest that many of those he criticizes are simple charlatans. Data-fudging by or on behalf of the late J. B. Rhine was, as it is from time to time in apparently more respectable parts of science than parapsychology, undertaken to support something sincerely believed in.

Gardner strikes the reader as someone who does not have a very rich or preoccupying inner life; he is too busy doing things in the public world, keeping his admirably broad range of interests in full operation. He is quite confident about his own motives for his "philosophical theism" and is absolutely frank about them. So he fails to ask why just these beliefs should be sheltered from the kind of rational appraisal that he regards as proper for everything else.

The latest collection of his essays and reviews, *Order and Surprise*, coming fairly hot on the heels of *Science: Good, Bad and Bogus*, collects a body of shorter writings for the most part on subjects other than pseudoscience. There are some extremely interesting recollections of the University of Chicago in the days of Robert Hutchins and of the philosophers Hutchins relied on: Mortimer Adler and Richard McKeon. Gardner's devotion to scientifically ascertainable fact is a reaction to the emphasis on ideas he was subjected to at Chicago.

He writes of slime, the fairly awful, wistfully ill-illustrated of the works of Lord Dunsany. There are no less than three essays on *The Wizard of Oz*, which he sees as a fountain of alchemical wisdom. There are attacks on Gerold L. K. Smith, an American fascist of the 1930s; on cultural relativism in mathematics and other places and on the "epistemological marchist" for whom no science is pseudo, Paul Feyerabend, whom he describes, fairly but with some force, as "a tiresome, self-centred, repulsive buffoon". These are enjoyable bits of work, always lucid and with a point, although some of the reviews are very short indeed. But the best Martin Gardner book is still *Faith and Fallacies*.

Trading in art

Pat Rogers

LOUISE LIPPINCOTT
Selling Art to Georgian London: The Rise of Arthur Pond
212pp. Yale University Press. £20.
0 300 03070 3

The life of Arthur Pond (b. 1701, we now learn, d. 1758) was quite short, and art history has been long enough in finding him a role outside footnotes and appendices. Sir Ellis Waterhouse once dismissed Pond's oil paintings as "uncommonly feeble"; but this would very little time—admirably little time, in many ways—to the motives of those who deceive others and perhaps themselves. He does not suggest that many of those he criticizes are simple charlatans. Data-fudging by or on behalf of the late J. B. Rhine was, as it is from time to time in apparently more respectable parts of science than parapsychology, undertaken to support something sincerely believed in.

This is the story Lippincott tells in an orderly and informative manner. Some of the marks of a dissertation are there—the ambition to mention everything, the stiff organization—but so are the less trumpeted virtues of the form: a desire and an ability to argue a case to its conclusion, together with a solid sense of the state of the art in this field of research. Lippincott mentions recent books on Hogarth and John Smith, together with a number of unpublished dissertations. Of these the closest comparison is perhaps with Alison S. Lawis's Harvard thesis on Joseph Highmore (1975), though that also has a *catalogue raisonné*.

Art as a trade

Francis Ames-Lewis

FRANCE COLE
The Renaissance Artist at Work: from Pisano to Titian
216pp. John Murray. £12.50.
0 19 574070 4

France Cole's new book does not fully live up to its ambitious title. Very welcome, however, is a series of general principles about how we should approach Renaissance art and the Renaissance artist's activities; set out in the first chapter of *The Renaissance Artist at Work*, which could profitably become standard reading for both the layman and the student new to the history of Renaissance art.

For these purposes, the Renaissance is given a chronologically very broad, but geographically narrow definition. Cole admits apologetically that he selects works "mainly from Central Italy, because I know them best"; but this bias has disadvantages. When he considers the technique and purpose of engraving, for example, he fails to mention its evolution in Northern Europe where, during this period, it was much more rapid and adventurous than in Italy. This section comes to a long chapter on the materials of Renaissance art which is useful, if rather monotonous; account of technical procedures. It is disappointing, however, that Cole fails to seize the opportunity to extrapolate speculatively from the account of the historical evolution of technical change. Greater consideration of issues such as the aesthetic and artistic pressures which prompted the development of oil-painting, and the reasons for the growth in the use of canvas, or of the decline of silverpoint in favour of chalk drawing, would have made the subject more vivid and thought-provoking.

The third quarter of the types of Renaissance art is given more like a catalogue than a descriptive consideration of the subject. Here, in particular, Cole's manner of expression shows signs of haste and a lack of editorial care. The last two often lapse into exaggeration

Lewis was unable to find out much concerning Highmore's financial affairs, or even if he had a bank account. The difference with Pond is that he left a detailed journal of expenses and receipts, which is now in the British Museum together with letters and inventories. The author has made good use of these facts and figures to open up his discussion of the artist's profession in early Georgian England. She has gone to sources as out of the way as fire insurance policy registers and inland revenue apprenticeship books. Her command of historical materials is impressive, though it is surprising that she (or Professor Stone) could let by references to "the Oxford scholar Richard Bentley" or to a philosopher "no more controversial than John Locke (a clergyman)".

Pond's career was in many respects archetypal of the age. He joined the St Martin's Lane Academy on its inception in 1720, along with his master John Vanderbank, Hogarth, William Kent, Giuseppe Grisoni, Highmore and many others. As time went on he joined a number of clubs, including the Roman and the "D" ("Dilettanti")—he had gone to Italy at just the right age, and arrived back to find Jonathan Richardson's influential discourses at work breeding a new race of connoisseurs. Late in life, he was elected to the Royal Society and to the Society of Antiquaries. An earlier and more obscure affiliation was with the Pope's Head Club in September 1744. Lippincott indicates this was named "evidently in memory of the poet", recently dead: but one suspects the title follows a shop-sign of the establishment where the gathering took place—very possibly Edmund Curll's shop, just down the road from Pond's strategic base in Great Queen Street. Curll had many contacts with the Knapton family, who were at the centre of Pond's circle, and was generally willing to earn an honest penny when all else failed.

Pond's rise may exhibit a brand of social significance, but often he was plain lucky. He gave drawing lessons to Lady Dysart and so quite early reached the notice of the Duchess

of Portland and Mrs Delany, the two indefatigable promoters of fashion for a generation to come. (Lippincott rather affectingly calls the latter "Mrs Delaney" throughout, even changing the titles of earlier books to this normalized form.) Then, when he turned to book illustration, he once more landed on his feet. The works for which he prepared designs included Middleton's *Life of Cicero*, a text that could do with some discreet grangerizing; Walter's account of *Anson's Voyage*, a well-paid assignment since the admiral, not the bookseller, was footing the bill; and Warburton's edition of Pope. Above all, he worked on the *Heads of Illustrious Persons* (1742 onwards), together with Houbraken and George Vertue: this caught the taste of the age, and briefly supplanted coins as a collecting fad.

In addition Pond seems to have made some canny political choices. Lippincott argues at one point that "taste seems to have existed independently of political alignment", but her own evidence does not fully support this view. Though Pond had clients in all ideological camps, he acquired a great deal of opposition patronage in a suspicious burst late in the 1730s. Images of Pym, Hampden, Cromwell and even Newton, which he copied, were Whig totems; and his friend John Dyer's *Ruins of Rome* clearly delineates the theme of civilization under Walpole falling into decay. One wonders if Pond managed to pick up some of the Prince of Wales's custom when Philippe Mercier fell into disgrace around 1737.

The ruins of Rome became a theme for Pond himself when he entered the most important phase of his career as a publisher of prints. After a bad start, with an ill-matched set based on a collection by the Comte de Caylus, Pond attempted caricature and then produced two real winners. The first was a set of *Italian Landscapes*, based around paintings by Poussin and Claude—Pond means Gaspard Poussin, as one would expect from a follower of Jonathan Richardson. The engravings were done with considerable finesse, and it was through this means that educated men and women in the eighteenth century receive their main impression of good landscape painting, unless they had been grand tourists, and even then forty-four paintings of this description would have meant a grand treat indeed. After this came the *Roman Antiquities* (from 1745), five large designs by Panini which landed another commercial coup. Panini is a more restrained and veracious-looking painter than Piranesi, but he too is dealing in caprice and fancy. Four of the



John Nixon's "An auctioneer at Margate", pen and grey ink and watercolour on grey wash, which was sold as part of a lot of seven sketches at Christie's on November 15, for £500.

designs are *vedute ideate*, with temple heaped on bosolia and mausoleum flanked by triumphal arch. The use to a consumer of such plangent imagery must have been extremely diverse. There is a passage in a letter by William Sheafstone dated 1755—one of the few Pond allusions not collected here—which ends up, "You cannot conceive the magnificence of their effect in a Camera". Views projected like this in a camera obscura, after being coloured, suggest just one area of the appeal of poetically conceived ruins.

Louise Lippincott's principal claim is that the art market increased in phase with other aspects of the commercialization of Britain. "Like literature, drama, horse racing, and tourism"—very much a post-Plumb collocation. She sees the rise of connoisseurship in the wake of Richardson's essays as a vital enabling factor for Pond's success, and documents the point efficiently. Successful for a time Pond assuredly was. *Virtue said that Pond had "dipped into the Cornucopia of Virtue in our general... [and] become the greatest or top virtuosos [sic] in London—followed esteem and cryd up...". It is the fate of the dernier cri soon to be drowned by the newest noises, but we ought to reserve some place in our sense of the art of the period for a man as energetic and resourceful as Pond.*

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208pp. Faber. £10.95.
0571 131352

This intriguing biography describes a woman who does not seem naturally to require a biography at all. It is true that Ivy Litvinov had an extraordinary life, and she appears to have been a formidable and colourful woman. She moved from impoverished Edwardian gentility to typing, inhabited the literary London of the Meynells, visited D. H. Lawrence in Italy, and suddenly married a Russian Communist exile who after the Revolution became a Commissar, was an architect of Soviet foreign policy, survived disgrace under Stalin to be ambassador to Washington, and died in 1951 just in time to avoid being a victim of Stalin's last purge.

Ivy was a successful translator, a teacher of Basic English and the author of three novels and some excellent stories and sketches. In her last years, in England, friends urged her to write her memoirs, and she left various tapes and a great confusion of papers. This project she called her "Sorterbiography". John Carswell, son of Catherine Carswell, Ivy's constant friend and correspondent, has written the story she failed to write. What he has written lacks, inevitably, immediacy, much detail and the trenchant and idiosyncratic style that distinguishes Ivy's correspondence and comments. Ivy Litvinov, very much the centre of her own world, was peripheral to everyone else's. Mr Carswell records precisely, and at one further remove, the world seen from that periphery.

Ivy Low was descended from immigrant intellectual Jews, on her father's side, and from an Indian Army officer on her mother's. Her grandfather, Maximilian Löwe, came to England in the wake of Kossuth, after the Hungarian revolution. Her scholarly father, Walter Litvinov, was a linguist and a general flightiness. It is easy to see that the Jewish socialist exile, Maxim Litvinov, appealed to the side of Ivy who idealized her lost father: a life which might appear to represent frightening uncertainty offered her in some sense the stability of lost origins. It is harder to see why the serious, middle-aged and politically preoccupied Maxim should have chosen a vivacious and loquacious girl in her early twenties who never shared his political ideals and kept her aggressive distance from his world. After the Revolution, when he returned to Russia, Ivy's London friends thought that she was now left with two small children and would not see Maxim again. In fact, after two years of waiting she joined him in 1920 and the strange marriage survived until his death. There was a moment when Litvinov, recalled by Stalin from Washington in 1943, thought of staying in America. Ivy, who loved America and its freedom, who had discovered New York and the *New Yorker*, for which she wrote many of her best stories, followed him back to the dangers of the Soviet Union. On his deathbed Maxim said "Englishwoman, go home." In 1972 she did. She died in Hove in 1977.



Carswell writes of her character with some vestige of the judging wonder of a child observing an extravagantly mannered grown-up. (He records his own birth during Ivy's bad two years before Russia.) He defines her, more than once, as a "delinquent", by which he seems to mean that she did what she pleased, ignoring proprieties, conventions, and occasionally morals. Her sexual life seems to have been voracious and odd; there is a pleasing account of an orgy she attended in Hamburg in 1928 where she rather resented not having her German lover to herself.

Orgies may be all right when one's feelings are not involved. Oh, well, what's the good of grumbling - it couldn't be helped, but I feel I've had too little of that kind of happiness, so terribly little that I do grudge

what might have been the happiest night of my life being spoiled...

But her tone is robustly practical and she records her amusement that one of the men clinging to his eyeglass throughout the proceedings.

Ivy's self-centred and unrepentant pursuit of happiness must have been an embarrassment and a potential danger to her beleaguered husband in a spy state. Carswell attributes her survival to what he calls a "kind of shell", a "carapace" which she "may have inherited from her Anglo-Indian ancestors". This book contains only muted references to the terrors of the death-camps and purges and does not dwell on the Litvinovs' fear of what could so easily have happened to them. Ivy

He points out early in his book that, particularly in Ivy's youth, Russian literature, through the Ginnett translations, was part of English literature in a way that Racine, say, was not. Ivy's stories about her childhood are clearly well written but not extraordinary. Her Russian tales have a Russian quality and are also very English, reminding one both of Chelton and of Katherine Mansfield, who once fell down a hill rather than face Ivy exuberantly welcoming her in a kimono. She observed the selfishness of old age with wry detachment. An old woman in a holiday home wants a solitary bedroom but learns to like her vulgar roommate, is aware that her need for a message about her grandson's health is primarily spied, not by concern for him, but by fear that she may be forgotten. In "Portrait of a Lady Vera Ivanovna, on holiday, makes the one assignment of a blameless life with an English admirer and is interrupted by an old friend who has returned after years of imprisonment. The two women eat the carefully prepared lunch the story records irritation, disappointment, relief, loyalty to the friend, each emotion exactly caught and deployed. They are good tales. Ivy's writing blossomed in her good decade.

She called her collection of stories *The Seven She Was Right*, adapting Trollope. She wrote, "There are things I do and don't do that most people don't and do, and there are holes in my self-respect." There were also cruelties. "How could I have done this, said that? What suffering I have caused." But John Carswell writes, "Naturally she at once absolved herself of all these venial sins. 'Still I think the HQ would be down about a lifetime of being... So - and therefore only a prudent fear of them. She revered Trollope and Jane Austen, D. H.

kept her distance. She helped individual survivors of the camps but made little comment on the enormities that lay behind them. Carswell writes: "She was not a person ever to make a general condemnation of what she had never generally supported. She was not an unfeeling person but she had spent her life in a dangerous country and was not the one to feel guilt or remorse."

The Sorterbiography might have enlightened us on life in Soviet Russia. Carswell records that Ivy lived through amazing public events with complete dedication to English literature, the English language, the idea of writing well. She had no respect for politicians - and therefore only a prudent fear of them. She revered Trollope and Jane Austen, D. H.

Of the highest order

A. G. Cross

NIKOLAI TOLSTOY
The Tolstoyas: Twenty-Four Generations of Russian History 1353-1983
368pp. Hamish Hamilton. £12.50.
0241 109795

Of the considerable number of Russian names that have impressed themselves on the consciousness of non-Russian peoples over the past century or so that of Tolstoy perhaps alone rivals Lenin's in general renown. But if, to search a Vladimir Ilich Lenin is to find the Ulyanovs, an obscure but worthy professional family from the Russian provinces, to scratch a Count Lev Tolstoy is to reveal a lineage as long as it is distinguished. It was a lineage of which Lev Tolstoy was himself highly conscious and indignantly proud. In a remarkable passage culled from the printed version of *War and Peace* he set out his reasons for excluding all but representatives "of the highest circle" from his novel, giving as the sixth and for him the most telling that "I myself belong to the highest order of society and like it". He went on to add that "I am not a bourgeois, as Pushkin boldly said, and I say boldly that I am an aristocrat by birth, by habit and by position. I am an aristocrat because I am not only not ashamed, but positively glad to remember my ancestors - fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers."

In *The Tolstoyas* Nikolai Tolstoy, representative of the twenty-fourth generation in the

to tell the family story over a period of some six hundred years. For the author, born in 1935 in an England to which his father had escaped fifteen years earlier, but conscious of a Russianness undimmed by his education in an English public school, his training at Sandhurst and his degree from Trinity College, Dublin, it is a voyage of discovery, no less moving for being fashionable, to find his "roots". Journey completed, he dedicates his work to his children, believing that it may "supply them with that essentially noble virtue: the ability to judge an ephemeral present by the sonorous procession of a golden past". But the Tolstoy past, to judge by the evidence of the book, contained other ores of an inferior kind.

Nikolai Tolstoy is concerned to show the "supra-individual unity" in his many-branched family, certain persistent characteristics conveyed through the male genes that include longevity, intellectual vigour, physical strength, a penchant for the opposite sex and, last but very certainly not least, family pride. The family also has its own patron saint and a family curse - delivered deservedly by Peter the Great's son, the unfortunate Aleksei, whose torture and death were supervised by a Tolstoy - that the family down to the twenty-fifth generation would spawn as many madmen as it would geniuses. Certainly, what the family did possess was an ability to come out on top, or pretty near it, from the most unpromising situations (it is reassuring to be told elsewhere that "survival is the Russian's most enduring quality"), and it has produced some remarkable characters.

The Tolstoyas allegedly descended from a Lithuanian knight Indris, who settled in Chernigov to the north of Kiev in the middle of the fourteenth century, but it was only three generations later that a descendant with excessive avolardupis received the sobriquet (the Russian for "fat") that became the famous family surname. Of the first fourteen generations of Tolstoyas (up to the mid-seventeenth century) there is very little known or worth relating, but the book's subtitle provides the excuse to fill the vacuum with historical set-pieces. The author is on much firmer ground when he is dealing squarely with his later Tolstoyas, and in the final eight chapters he presents a portrait gallery of diplomats, ministers, generals, artists and writers who variously display mad-cap eccentricity, proud independence, reactionary elitism, great gifts and abilities but only in one case, indisputable genius. Lev Tolstoy's genius, however, manifested itself in his fiction, for in his personality there was much that was simply unattractive or worse. Far more appealing were the gentle Fedor Petrovich Tolstoy, a highly talented medallist at the Academy of Arts, and content with a life of bourgeois family bliss; and Aleksei Konstantinovich Tolstoy, poet and dramatist, brought up by a loving mother who escaped from her husband within a year of their marriage. But there was in many Tolstoyas a fair degree of nastiness, apparent above all in Peter Andreievich Tolstoy who, initially very willing to bulch the young Tsar Peter, became his consummate diplomat and compliant henchman, and his distant descendant, the perfectly

Lawrence, Adrian Bell and Henry Green, *Ulysses* but not *Finnegans Wake*. She wanted to be a writer and had a colossal writer's block, beautifully described here. (She even wrote a crime story under hypnosis.) She and Maxim were addicted to word games, anagrams, Scrabble. She said of herself that she was "too cerebral but at the same time not really finished for hard thinking". Which is exactly witty.

Carswell feels, as far as can be seen, a mixture of admiration for this stubborn dedication and exasperation that, caught up in the niceties of English prose, the working and reworking of accounts of her early childhood and her first encounter with her husband, she was somehow incapacitated from telling her life story.

He is not an "official history" but it is solidly based on US official documents released under the Freedom of Information Act, together with a large number of British documents in the Public Record Office, some of which may star the British historians. So the book is dense, though Smith has worked hard - usually with success - to make it lively and readable as well. But the trouble with war histories based on official documents is that almost inevitably they turn out to be a record, not so much of what was actually achieved, but of inter-departmental, inter-governmental or purely personal disputes and rivalries. Again, in trying to record the real achievements of OSS, he has come up against a further problem: how to strike a fair balance between the natural tendency of some OSS documents to make exaggerated claims and the equal tendency of its opponents or rivals (whether American or British) to debunk such claims or underestimate real achievements. Usually he leans towards the debunking side. Old OSS hands may think him unfair. But so also may British old hands, especially in SOE; and it would be easy to challenge him on details of fact or interpretation. But obviously he is a brave man and ready to take on all comers.

The most fascinating theme in the book is the character of the only begetter of OSS, Colonel (later Major-General) "Wild Bill" Donovan. OSS would never have existed without him. Equally, his erratic conduct made it pretty certain that it would not survive the war. Smith writes of Donovan's "inspiration, bravery, impetuosity, innovation and surprise", but also says he was "a dreadful administrator". He quotes General George Marshall on Donovan as "fearless and aggressive character" and a British Foreign Office view that he was "more of a fighter than an administrator, with an Irishman's wit and mercurial temperament".

With the obvious exception of *Levi Tolstoy* and the possible one of Aleksei Tolstoy, whose major novels have appeared in English translation, the remaining Tolstoyas are known in the West only to specialists in Russian history and culture. It is as if to satisfy the specialist that he has done his homework that Nikolai Tolstoy provides extensive endnotes, employing the Cyrillic script rather than transliteration and carefully preserving the old letters abolished after the Revolution for pre-1917 editions. The book itself, however, is steadfastly aimed at a wider readership possibly prepared to follow the fortunes of the Tolstoyas through thick rather than thin.

The proceedings of the Second International Conference organized by the Study Group on Eighteenth Century Russia and held at the University of East Anglia in July 1981 are now published. The volume is edited by A. G. Cross. It contains lectures by Prof. Dukes, H. Grasshof, Isabel de Madariaga, I. Z. Seaman, and papers under the following headings: "Printing, publishing and the book", "Literature", "Translation and the West", "The armed forces, government and society", "Commerce and industry", "The arts", "The church", "The family", "The individual", "The nation", "The world".

Sharing intelligence

Elisabeth Barker

BRADLEY F. SMITH
The Shadow Warriors: OSS and the Origins of the CIA
372pp. André Deutsch. £18.95.
0233 575772

When he set out to write a detailed history of the Office of Strategic Services, Bradley F. Smith took on a challenge that would have daunted most serious historians. The OSS was the American equivalent of at least four British organizations operating in the Second World War: MI6 or the Secret Intelligence Service; SOE (the Special Operations Executive); FWE (the Political Warfare Executive); and the Foreign Office Research Department, composed of distinguished academics and related ambassadors. Professor Smith has rolled up all OSS's varied and constantly changing activities in nearly all war theatres into a book of under 500 pages.

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ment". Another British official called him "a child in political matters", but an MI6 man remarked (once the war was over): "he is such a dear old thing... a brave and shrewd and lovable person for all the blarney".

His relations with the British were chequered. In 1940, when he came to Britain as one of Roosevelt's many personal envoys soon after the fall of France, he was welcomed with open arms and eagerly courted by Churchill and his colleagues, anxious to win American sympathies and material aid. On a second trip at the beginning of 1941, it was under British auspices that he visited the Middle East and called in at several Balkan capitals, blowing a trumpet for Britain. Churchill was delighted, sending a message of praise and thanks to Roosevelt. In practical terms, however, Donovan does not seem to have achieved much; certainly neither he nor the British SOE can claim credit for the Belgrade coup of March 1941 which brought down Hitler's wrath on Yugoslavia - an event for which Smith blames Britain rather too harshly.

Then, when the United States was drawn directly into the war, Donovan started building the vast, incoherent organization which was to become OSS, and in this he used his close ties with the British - including SOE - to good purpose in the inevitable internal struggles in Washington: at that time, these ties were a big asset to him. But when it came to setting up a working partnership with OSS's British opposite numbers, trouble was inevitable. The British were bound to see OSS as raw and inexperienced newcomers, and OSS to see the British as a dog in the manger. However, by an agreement of June 1942, OSS and SOE carved up the world, with the British - in the OSS view - coming up against a further problem: how to strike a fair balance between the natural tendency of some OSS documents to make exaggerated claims and the equal tendency of its opponents or rivals (whether American or British) to debunk such claims or underestimate real achievements. Usually he leans towards the debunking side. Old OSS hands may think him unfair. But so also may British old hands, especially in SOE; and it would be easy to challenge him on details of fact or interpretation. But obviously he is a brave man and ready to take on all comers.

Donovan, by this time seeing the British as an obstacle to any expansion of OSS in what was at that moment a promising field of action, seized his chance. He put to the American Joint Chiefs of Staff what appeared to be a long-term policy: to induce the Balkan States to assist in "the establishment of relatively stable non-communist but not anti-Russian government". Thereafter, in an incident which Smith deals with rather perfunctorily, Roosevelt proposed to Churchill that Donovan should be sent to the Balkans where "all the agencies of ours" should be placed under his direction: "being a fearless and aggressive character he might do much good". Churchill, reasonably enough, rejected the idea. Donovan was underdressed, sending an independent OSS mission to Turkey and - without telling

the British - launching an effort to get Bulgaria out of the war.

With this in mind, he had an American representative tell the Moscow Foreign Ministers' conference in October 1943 that OSS ought to carry out extensive subversive warfare in the Balkans. And in December, Donovan himself went to Moscow and told Molotov that he wanted to get Bulgaria out of the war - though without mentioning the creation of Balkan "non-communist" governments. However, in the spring of 1944 the OSS effort to detach Bulgaria fizzled out; it was left to the British to try to support the communist-led Bulgarian partisans - as things turned out, fruitlessly.

The interesting question - not clearly answered by Smith - is how far Donovan, independently of the British, went on pursuing this aim of "non-communist" Balkan governments throughout the crucial year, 1944; and how far he had the private backing of Roosevelt (whose official policy, especially in an election year, was of course that Americans should keep clear of the muck of the Balkans, both militarily and politically). There are certain pointers. In Yugoslavia, the OSS established an independent mission to Tito in the spring, but tried to keep representatives with Mihailovic when the British withdrew all their men. Later, when the Red Army was entering Yugoslavia from the east and linking up with Tito's forces, OSS sent in Colonel McDowell, described by Smith as "a conservative anti-Titoist", to Mihailovic, who had his blessing in contacts with German agents proposing separate peace. Churchill protested to Roosevelt over the McDowell mission; Roosevelt answered apologetically but did nothing to hurry its withdrawal.

In Romania, OSS seems to have had little to do with King Michael's anti-German coup in August 1944. But in Hungary, it looks as though it tried to play an active role. Already in the autumn of 1943, Donovan, according to Smith, reasserting British activities which he saw as "obstacles to Balkan operations", refused to let the British in on OSS contacts with the Hungarians through Istanbul. With whom the OSS was in contact, Smith does not say, but since he records that in 1942 Donovan had urged Roosevelt to use the Archduke Otto Habsburg to establish links with Hungary, and since in late 1943 British contacts (known to the Americans) with the Hungarian "surrender group" were for a time muddled by reports reaching Budapest that the Americans were planning to restore Otto to the Hungarian throne, the answer seems obvious.

What is certain is that at the two Quebec conferences, in August 1943 and September 1944, Roosevelt got Churchill to see Otto, who seems to have aroused all Churchill's romantic nostalgia for fallen monarchies. And in Budapest in recent years, some Hungarian historians have produced evidence of a curious American-sponsored mission to Hungary at

the time of the Slovak rising in August 1944, involving a project for landing American airborne troops near Budapest, to be followed shortly by Otto himself to head a new government. If there is any trace of such a project in the OSS files, Smith has obviously not seen it, and he is a very thorough researcher. All the same, these pointers make it tempting to suppose that - with or without Roosevelt's blessing - Donovan was pursuing in 1944 the policy he had put to the American Chiefs of Staff in 1943, of setting up "non-communist" governments in South-East Europe.

Yet this hypothesis, alluring as it is, comes up against a fascinating chapter in Smith's book - a detailed account of Donovan's persistent efforts, from December 1943 on, to cooperate closely with the Soviet NKVD, especially in an exchange of intelligence. He pursued these, in spite of discouragement and difficulties both on the Soviet side and in Washington, until the war's end; in spite too of the fact - which Smith does not mention - that in late 1944, after American planes unintentionally bombed Soviet troops in the Balkans, the Soviet government refused to give the information needed to fix a "bomb line" which would prevent such accidents in future. And one particularly startling fact is revealed by Smith: in December 1944, when the Russians had already purged "non-communist" political leaders from the post-coup Romanian government, Donovan "provided the NKVD with information on an anti-Soviet plot being hatched by Romanian military officers".

After this it seems difficult to believe that Donovan was following any consistent policy of establishing "non-communist" governments in post-war South-East Europe. What seems more likely is that it was a question of professional rivalry - to outwit and out-bid the British. If so, the confusion which clashing American and British activities must have created throughout the area must have been considerable, and may well have had long-term effects. However this may be, Smith makes it clear that Donovan's erratic conduct made it easy for his opponents in Washington, during 1945, to launch the campaign for the perpetuation of the OSS in peacetime. He also shows that the well-organized build-up of a romanticized OSS legend in the following year helped to clear the way for the establishment in July 1947 of the CIA, directly under the President.

The birth of the CIA led the British Chiefs of Staff to urge that Britain should have a corresponding organization. But Ernest Bevin, as Foreign Secretary, wouldn't have it. The most he would concede was "a small department" in the Foreign Office for counter-propaganda work. And at least as long as Bevin was Foreign Secretary, a "small department" was what it remained. But that is a footnote to the story which, naturally enough, is not included in Bradley Smith's very enlightening and stimulating book.

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THE STORY OF
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LOUIS HEREN

£14.95 Illustrated MICHAEL JOSEPH

Buttressing the welfare state

Geoffrey Sampson

NICK BOSANQUET
After the New Right
211pp. Heinemann. £14.50 (paperback,
£5.95).
0435 840789

The "New Right", for Nick Bosanquet, is the current trend of opinion which favours reducing the domain of state activity and enlarging the domain of private contractual relationships. This point is worth making, since the "right" in politics had traditionally been associated with belief in entrenched hierarchies of status maintained by strong states – an attitude as hostile as socialism towards Hayekian or Friedmanite advocacy of the liberating effects of markets. Indeed, socialists nowadays are sometimes unscrupulous about using the term "Right" as a vague catch-all in order to blur the distinction between economic liberalism and doctrines of racial supremacy which most economic liberals abhor.

Bosanquet's criticism is in a different league of intellectual precision. He understands, as few yet do, that contemporary neo-liberal thought itself embraces a wide spectrum of major differences of belief and approach. One half of his book is a survey of various strands of neo-liberal thinking, concentrating mainly on Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, and the "Virginia School". In the other half Bosanquet offers a defence of various welfare state policies against neo-liberal attacks.

Bosanquet is very fair to his subjects. From an author whose last book was *Labour and*

Equality, co-edited with Peter Townsend, we might have expected a touch of ranting; but Bosanquet never stoops to making mere debating points. Indeed his book is a remarkable index of how for economic liberals have won their arguments in recent years; Bosanquet is repeatedly defensive on topics where socialists ten years ago would have seen no need for defence. How many people in the early 1970s doubted that it paid a society to educate its young at public expense because diffusion of education throughout a population had tangible beneficial effects extending well beyond the superior working abilities that could be reflected in individuals' wages and salaries? Yet Bosanquet accepts E. G. West's *Education and the State* as having "conclusively" refuted this fallacy; if state education can be justified at all, according to Bosanquet, it is only because, at primary and secondary levels, it mixes up the classes and promotes a measure of social solidarity.

Bosanquet is an economist and, though he sometimes remembers to make concessions to the layman, he addresses himself chiefly to fellow economists. This makes for weaknesses in the book; Bosanquet is often naïve about the moral dimension in political issues and the passions they engender. He devotes disproportionate space to the details of technical controversies between Friedman and other economists; sometimes his writing seems to suggest that Mrs Thatcher's rise to power in 1979 was the consequence of millions of voters noticing flaws of reasoning in Keynes's *General Theory of Employment*. (The book is slackly written, moreover, and poorly edited; the au-

thor frequently repeats himself from page to page.) But, at the strictly economic level, Bosanquet makes worthwhile criticisms of neo-liberal thought, some of which are as far as I know quite novel.

His strongest section is in defence of the state role in providing old-age pensions – a topic which, while unexciting, is highly relevant given that the growing proportion of old people in the population is now widely seen as the chief obstacle to reduction of public spending. Economic liberals often argue that individuals can and should make their own pension arrangements out of income in their earning years, and they criticize the state system in which current pensions are paid out of general tax revenues rather than being tied to contributions. Bosanquet argues that, whether or not the will were there, it is just wrong to think that the population at large could invest to produce pensions for themselves. Modern trends cause returns to physical capital to fall in comparison to returns to human capital; yet investment can only be in physical capital; pension arrangements must necessarily depend on the ability of the state to tax returns to human capital. I am not sure how sound this argument is – accepting that one cannot buy a share in an educated man, is it not nevertheless true that an investment in, say, a computer manufacturing firm is to a large extent an investment in the human capital of the minds of its managers and staff (including their ability to recruit suitable successors)? But this kind of point by Bosanquet raises the standard of debate between liberals and socialists to a higher level than it has often occupied.

Where Bosanquet tries to rely on non-economic arguments, on the other hand, he falls down badly. Thus, rent control is surely among the least defensible of socialist policies, and must bear a heavy share of responsibility for Britain's economic decline; by drying up the private rental market and creating long queues for council housing it has made the right to continue occupying a particular house many people's major capital asset, so that workers have quite rationally used all their political muscle to keep dying jobs alive rather than moving voluntarily to "sunrise" industries elsewhere. Bosanquet concedes the economic case against rent control, but says that "the idea that there is a core of rights which should not be for sale... has proved powerful"; tenants suffer from "extreme sensitivity about dispossession". Shelter is a very basic need, but so is food, which is provided entirely by private enterprise; why, then, do we not find estates bagged by fears that Tesco's might suddenly price them out of the market? According to Bosanquet, "a system based on private landlords is essentially archaic", yet this system seems to work, better than ours, in many modern Western countries.

I do not see Bosanquet's book doing much to stem the tide of liberal opinion. (The *After* in his title is unexplained: his first sentence describes New Right influence as growing, and nothing in the book contradicts this.) But it is good to see a representative of the Left subjecting individual neo-liberal policies to serious critical scrutiny, rather than slavishly rejecting the whole movement and hoping it will go away.

Getting away from Gradgrind

David Martin

MICHAEL NOVAK
The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism
336pp. New York: American Enterprise
Institute/Simon and Schuster (available in the
UK through Silco Books). Paperback, £9.
0071431544

Since this book appeared in its original hardback edition, it has been the centre of some pretty violent controversy, especially in the pages of *Commonweal*. Part of the reason may be that Michael Novak was once a Man of the Studies, active in that astonishing amalgam of anarchic individualism, utopian protest and communal nostalgia. In those days he saw American society as technocratic and apiritless, corporatist and militaristic. But of recent years he has devoted his remarkable energy and literary verve to the defence of what he calls the Spirit of Democratic Capitalism. What he previously saw as spiritless is now celebrated as the most inspiring of social systems. In many ways he is to be compared to Paul Johnson, who underwent his own crisis and also emerged to defend and celebrate what previously he had fiercely attacked. Like Paul Johnson, Michael Novak is a Roman Catholic.

In *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, now revised in a paperback edition, Novak presents a discussion of the partial correlations to be observed between capitalism and democracy, and also of the vigorous and able form which democratic capitalism is held to achieve in Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture. This argument was popular among populists and nationalists nearly a century ago and now a Roman Catholic whose roots are in Slovakia emerges to lend it fresh support.

Whatever the unlovely chauvinism which may lie alongside the posited relationship between capitalism and democracy, it is a social scientific hypothesis which retains plausibility. If we take the view that liberty and prosperity are both social conditions which are difficult to achieve and historically rare, then capitalist societies have moved in the direction of both together with relative frequency. These interrelated connections immediately run into various difficulties, which tease the mind and frustrate firm conclusions without being necessarily fatal to the basic argument. The most teasing questions concern what one ought to locate as the key cultural element which underpins democracy, or of any role gives it that body and naturalness which it lacks elsewhere. How central, for example, is the free-church tradition in the genesis of democracy and capitalism in Britain and the United States, and what within that tradition is most operative? Is it the famous Protestant Ethic in combination with the fact that free churches initiate pluralism, indeed depend on it, and thereby dissolve the centre of the unitary state? Novak lays great stress on the existence of what he calls "the empty shrine" at the centre of American society.

Against the record of Anglo-Saxon culture he sets the bumpy ride which democracy has had in many Roman Catholic societies, and he associates this with the tendency of the Catholic Church to prefer the unitary state and to mathematize capitalist organization as mere individualism, materialist "Manchesterism". The other form of the unitary state is, of course, Marxism, and Novak argues that nowhere has the centralization of economic and political decisions, central to Marxist societies, proved compatible with liberty. He draws the conclusion that while concentrated private power may in important ways skew the democratic process, nevertheless without liberty of economic decision there is no liberty of the mind whatsoever.

No doubt the argument is as labyrinthine as the Protestant Ethic thesis, to which it is clearly related. Not only does it run into snaky tail-chasing spirals of causality, and problems about what cultural element is contingent, or central, or what is the optimum combination of elements. There are also problems about how to demarcate categories: What is democratic capitalism, and for that matter, what is democratic socialism? The democratic argument is only defended by Novak as both a political condition and a normative ideal.

ments may be labelled as distorted, imperfect, bastard or arrested.

Was there initially a bad form of laissez-faire capitalism, prototypically represented by Mr Gradgrind, against which people and movements fought until it became less capitalistic and therefore more tolerable? Put in this way, one might claim that the most tolerable form of democratic capitalism was the transformation we call democratic socialism. However, the matter can be put differently. Capitalism, provided it retains the defining characteristic of being mostly powered by private economic decisions and by the market, engenders that plurality of movements and that sense of the individual which assists rapid amelioration and endless self-correction.

Novak suggests that one ought to recognize that capitalism breeds a civil consciousness as well as individuality. And he could have added further that the idea of an original and pure laissez-faire capitalism is partly created by our use of lenses provided by (say) Ruskin and Carlyle. Lionel Robbins demolished the myth of laissez-faire in his *Theory of Economic Policy in English Classical Political Economy* (1952) and there are some pertinent comments on the matter in George Watson's *The English Ideology* (1973).

In Novak's view, those who say that democratic capitalism is not the original real capitalism must face the fact that democratic socialism, for example in Scandinavia, is not real socialism either, indeed gives up the definitive characteristic of socialism. He adds that with every shift in the direction of socialism beyond the fundamental ameliorations successively achieved in Britain by Conservative and Liberal governments and the Labour Government of 1945-51, the degree of dependency increases, the weight of bureaucracy grows heavier, and the innovations, the initiative and personal responsibility essential to wealth creation and social improvement generally, are stifled.

All this puts Novak at the heart of current debate. Novak's further and, indeed, familiar contention about the relatively greater importance of practice as compared to theory in the heartlands of "democratic capitalism" raises some interesting questions once it is placed in the religious context central to Novak's whole enterprise. It is clear (as A. M. C. Waterman has recently argued) that Mrs Thatcher has revived a tradition of Christian Political Economy propounded by such early figures as Poley, Sumner, Copleston, Whately and Chalmers. A parallel tradition existed in America and a notable exponent, for example, was Weyland at Brown University, Providence, significantly *dux et origo* of the Baptists in America and of American tolerance and pluralism. Whatever the partial blessings, however, that have been bestowed by Protestants from time to time on political economy, Novak's principal aim is to highlight the neglect of economics, and the dilution of the whole world it inhabits, found in the Roman Catholic Church from the mid-nineteenth century till very recently. Roman Catholic intellectuals and secular intellectuals, supplemented by the voice of denizens of the media, are conjoined, if by nothing else, in the denigration of the businessman as tasteless, repressed, exploitative, over-rewarded and socially irresponsible. The denigration, says Novak, is not usually supported by careful analyses of what options are actually available to a naughty world, but works through moral aspersions and "buzz words".

Novak castigates in particular the proponents of liberalist theology in Latin America for lack of economic and political realism. He ascribes this, in part, to the Marxistoid perspectives brought by the middle-class foreigners who staff much of the Church apparatus. In this area, Novak's position overlaps the critique developed by Edward Norman. He holds that the substance of the liberalist rhetoric ecclesiastical thought is political rhetoric decked out in theological terminology and images, and describes it as "vague and dreamy", lacking in an analysis of the diversity of concrete persons, events and institutions: "What are the raw institutions which will replace the old? How far does the exorcization of the United States serve to hide the spiritual

frustrations which arise because of the cultural and religious traditions inherited from Spanish and Portuguese Catholicism?

In the last section of the book Novak turns to the adumbration of a theology of economics, which both criticizes liberationist theology and points to a recovery of Reinhold Niebuhr as central to Christian political realism. It is certainly true that the neglect of Niebuhr in Christian social thinking over the last two decades has been a major weakness. The question is, and always has been, not What is the best-looking ensemble of attitudes, but What are the viable policies available within very severe constraints, and how do we understand their long-term consequences? Niebuhr is the apostle of this realism. Interestingly enough, Niebuhr's influence has extended across the political spectrum to such people as Richard Crossman for example, but nowadays he is probably cited more by apologists for the Anglo-American way of life than by its critics.

The criticism of clerical social thinking today comes from different directions. The critique of Solzhenitsyn, for example, has much of the traditional dislike of liberal democratic society as slack, materialistic, bereft of meaning and fragmented, without, however, retaining any illusions about the superiority of the liberalist or Marxist alternative. The critique mounted by Edward Norman concentrates on showing up the "bourgeois" character of Christian progressivism, though it is sometimes uncertain precisely what Norman means by "bourgeois". At any rate, some elements of Marxist rhetoric are switched around and reused in the conservative attack on left-liberalism. The critique of Peter Berger and Michael Novak holds basically that America, with all its faults, failures, ethnocentric blindness and vulgarities, holds the best hope for liberty with prosperity, for whole populations, not just for elites. The way to prosperity exists, in Berger's phrase, "pyramids of sacrifice", and the

conclusion is that more blood, toil and repression follow from all the other alternatives than from the way pioneered by "democratic capitalism".

In this kind of intellectual eoterpie, it is easy to mistake correlation for causation, to misidentify the key factors, to be loose in the use of categories, to suppose recent achievements of long standing, to exaggerate the achievements of Western societies in dispersing power and attaining general prosperity and equality of opportunity. It is also easy to fall into a kind of economism, which is itself unrealistic because it does not work out the whole range of hidden social costs – and therefore economic costs – following from this or that policy. What is quite certain is that the implementation of moral priorities is dependent on a thoroughly professional grasp of economic science. It is also clear that some of the favoured devices for extending democracy in our society, eg, "participation", turn out as golden opportunities for the activist caucus and the manipulative minority to force everybody to be continually engaged in self-defence. Nothing is more dreadful than the constant politicization of the whole of life, and, as Novak argues, there is no better recipe for inefficiency.

I suspect that many who share the pre-occupations of Berger and Novak are "trimmers" in the best sense of the term. Novak quotes Churchill as saying (perhaps of his own variations in political allegiance) that when the boat keels over in one direction it is important to lean in the other. The original of that quotation is surely the Marquis of Halifax's *Character of a Trimmer*: "The innocent word 'Trimmer' signifies no more than this. That if men are together in a boat, and one part of the company would weigh it down on one side, another would make it lean as much to the contrary."

The ponache of this book makes it a piece of expert leaning.

Illuminating the Leaderene

John Wicks

Margaret Thatcher: Wife, Mother, Politician
214pp. Sidgwick and Jackson. £8.50.
0283 989096

"She thrived on it all. While everyone around her sunk (sic) deeper into exhaustion and collapse, Margaret grew brighter, prettier, and more charismatic every day. Vanished was the 'Duchess', the research chemist who had never known what to say to the men on the factory floor. She took peoples' hands in hers and talked to them with the concentration of a faith healer."

What, you might well ask, is a nice girl like Penny Junor doing writing drivel like this? How could an intelligent journalist, who clearly set out to write a serious political biography, end up as Barbara Cartland, chronicling the rise of a paddy shopgirl from Grantham to the tempestuous beauty who enslaved the courts of Europe and dazzled, briefly, even the Old Emperor himself in Washington?

The mystery is easier to unravel than it might at first appear. Despite a perfunctory puddle of drool on the first page – "growing radiance... a crusader... fundamental belief in Christianity" – presumably added at the last minute to try and make it match the second part, the opening section conforms to the author's original intentions: Mrs Thatcher is a bossy, bright child prematurely active with the powder puff, hogging the questions to visiting lecturers at school, and so unpopular that other girls take the long way round to avoid having to walk home with her. At Oxford she assumes a lah-de-dah voice, refers to tight-fisted old Alf Roberts as "Daddy", or "the Mayor of Grantham", is criticized for "her blatant use of people", and after a spell in the R & D Department, of B.X.P.V.C. at Colchester, gets two fingers from the workers and becomes known as "Auntie Margaret" or "the Duchess". Then, on page 29, enter Dennis of Atlas Preservatives, driving a Jag – "It was Dennis's money that helped me on my way" – and we're off.

For a while the style continues incisive and entertaining. Having produced the Instant Family in the form of the Lewis, she enrolls for her Bar Finale in the maternity ward, and commiserates with married friends in Grantham: "I don't know how you manage, I have to have a nanny for mine!" Dennis's language is "some-

thing she has never grown entirely used to", she tails at Carol being offered bubble and gum, and the author's own language is on scraps – and Mark is charitably described as "going through a phase of being an odious little boy".

Then, with the seizure of power, the grudging, anonymous, critical informers fall away and two voices become dominant: the cigars-and-champagne chuckle of Ronnie Corbett-lookalike Gordon Reece, Mrs Thatcher's "political advisor", and the Noel Coward warblings of Sir "Ronnie" Millar, he of the silk dressing-gown and roguish cigarette-bolder, gag-writer to the Leaderene. From then on poor Penny Junor is in their power, swept away like Pinocchio by the sly theatricals in "Hey fiddle-dee-dee, an actor's life for me!" If little Gordon's gurgling flood of reminiscence falters for a moment, Sir Ronnie is always there to fill in, every note on costume and scenery to band, every word of the dialogue remembered down to the last pregnant pause.

Then at about four to the morning Margaret turned to Ronald Millar and said "Have you thought... If we win, have you thought of anything I could say at Downing Street?" "Yes", said Ronnie. "Tell." They found a room to themselves, and Ronald Millar read the piece he had prepared from St Francis of Assisi. "Where there is discord may we bring harmony, where there is error may we bring truth, where there is doubt may we bring faith, and where there is despair may we bring hope." For the first time that day Margaret showed emotion, her eyes filled with tears. They went and found Alison Ward to ask her to type the piece, and she too burst into tears all over the typewriter.

Gordon Reece confesses that when he took on Mrs Thatcher "there were people who thought he was committing professional suicide". As a not particularly distinguished Light Entertainment producer at ATV, he could have found a higher ledge from which to jump. Sir Ronnie's professional suicide consisted in abandoning a career in C.P.Snow adaptations for the West End. Penny Junor's plunge comes from the relative eminence of a book on Princess Di and one on *Babyware*. Whether Mrs Thatcher herself is committing professional suicide by letting herself be "sold" by these starry-eyed scribes, actor laddies and pedlars of romantic soft-porn depends. I suppose, on the gullibility of the public. Somewhere, in another place perhaps, her hero Sir Winston must be clapping a hand over his eyes in shame.

Producing la Puritana

Martin Clark

PAOLO FILO DELLA TORRE
Thatcher: La bambola di ferro
185pp. Milan: Rizzoli. L13.000.
0532053

British writers on Italian political affairs are almost embarrassingly numerous, but it is not often that Italians return the compliment. Paolo Filo della Torre, London correspondent of *La Repubblica*, has now taken the plunge and produced a short popular biography of the politician whom he calls, variously, the Lady, the First Lady (sic) or, more operationally, la Thatcher. I therefore began this book hoping for a new perspective, to see our leader as others see her. Unfortunately, Signor della Torre seems to have been in this country too long. A devotee of the Anthony Sampson school of political analysis, he offers us exactly what we can get already from the *Observer* or the *Guardian*. Moreover, he obviously finds Mrs Thatcher less than fascinating; it is contemporary Britalia that interests him, and often horrifies him.

He starts off in excellent style, with a cheerful gallop through the Macmillan years – all grouse moors, clubland and decadence – and the Swinging Sixties. Macmillan's resignation in 1963 was, apparently, Britalia's "October Revolution", or rather her Fall of the Bastille; it marked the end of the old ruling class. This seems slightly exaggerated, especially in view of Macmillan's successor. Still, the Establishment eventually gets what is coming to it; la Thatcher. Not that it minds. On the contrary, for English people the whip is an essential aphrodisiac. So Mrs Thatcher is portrayed, in familiar lippon-Froudan terms, as the stern governess, ever ready to chastise her awestruck but delighted charges.

But della Torre has a more serious message too. His heroine has considerable political virtues – courage, shrewdness, firmness, a sense of duty and a gift for handling publicity; also a certain ruthlessness, an ability always to find scapegoats when things go wrong. He even compares her to Cromwell, another zealous Puritan bent on purging the old parasites of Church and State; and he approves of her crusade. Moreover, he stresses that Mrs Thatcher, underneath, indeed shares many popular ideals and suspicions. She is a woman of the people. That is why she was able to upstage the

Labour Party last June; she is more Methodist than they are. Her Churchillian rhetoric, her corner-shop economics and her Victorian values are just the things, writes della Torre, for a nation of shopkeepers.

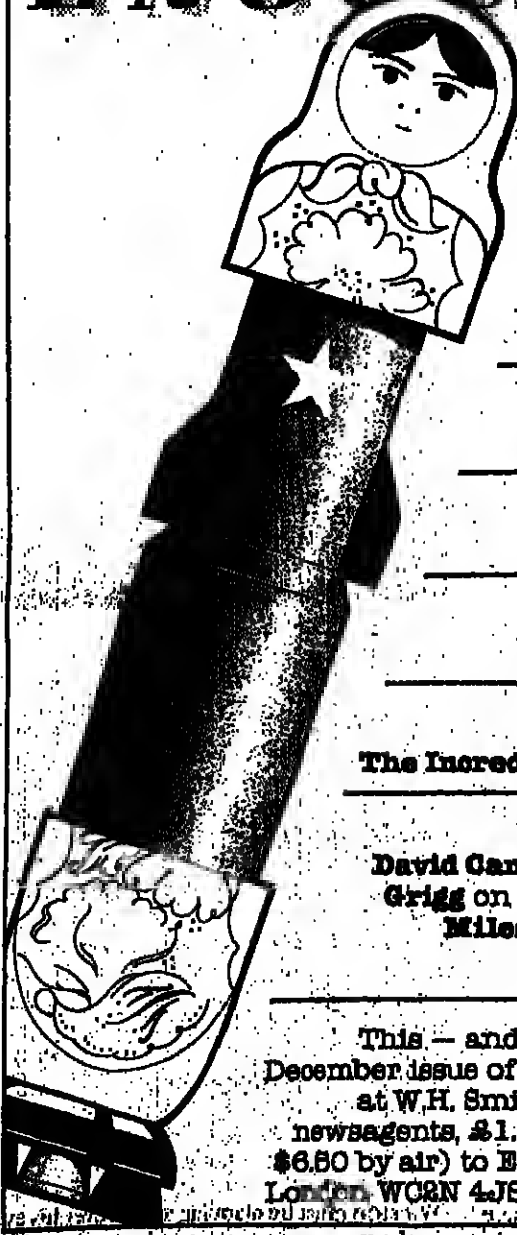
A certain respect for Thatcher the woman is also evident. Her skin, her eyes, her legs, all receive commendation. She is still an attractive woman, and she knows how to use her feminine appeal and how to look vulnerable. There are, it is true, some ungallant remarks about hair-tinting and tooth-straightening, but nothing too critical; even her accent is said to be acceptable. Wistfully della Torre urges her to be less of an Iron Lady, and turn into "Mama Thatcher" instead.

Della Torre is not always so polite about his Cromwellian subject. He breathes a few suspicious clouds of megalomania and quick temper, and expresses reservations about the wisdom of strident attacks on the USSR. He points out that the much-vaulted scourge of the Establishment has had little effect on the bureaucracy, but a great deal on the poor and the sick. And he wonders why some sacred cows, like nuclear power-stations and missiles, have remained exempt from her strictures.

However, his real criticism is not of Mrs Thatcher herself, who simply represents her country only too well. Like most liberal Europeans, della Torre is astonished by the vulgar nationalism of contemporary Britain. As an anti-Fascist Italian, he is particularly scathing about our ludicrous dreams of imperial glory ("da Benito", as he puts it), and about the "Boys' Own" patriotism of the press during the Falklands war; and he naturally resents the racist assumptions of superiority over Latin America. He thinks the social atmosphere in Britain has changed markedly over the past few years, but is just as lazy as before, but more bad-tempered, more suspicious of each other, and far less tolerant. We look backwards rather than forwards, let alone onwards. We allow our Welfare State to be dismantled, just when we need it most. We don't even try to successfully, it is too easy blaming Mrs Thatcher for all this but fault lies in ourselves. Perhaps the nationalist interpretation is right after all: we are a nation of masochists.

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Loving, working and suffering

Hugo Williams

GERALD NICOSIA
Memory Babe: A Critical Biography of Jack Kerouac
767pp. Grove Press. £14.95.
0394 522702

Jack Kerouac's reputation has always suffered from association with others of his sprawling, spilt generation. To talk about him as a writer at all is thought rather original, as if one were saying what a marvellous writer Frank Sinatra was, or one of the astronauts, or Allen Ginsberg. One night in 1945, Ginsberg, Kerouac, William Burroughs and Hal Chase were all in bed together on benzedrine, a typically heroic beat tableau. Suddenly Chase got the idea that he and Kerouac, solitary figures deep-rooted in America, were on the other side of a great divide from the two sophisticated men of the East - city men looking to the culture of Europe. Hal modestly called himself end Kerouac "Wolfenbats" - they were being Thomas Wolfe and Jack London at the time - all-American boys versus the Baudelairean black priests. There may have been something in this, but the busy rationalizing of the dubiously hetero gentiles against all jew-fairies comes a little more comic than telling in the cosy context of bed and bennies. Needless to say, Ginsberg didn't see the joke and nor does Gerald Nicosia. But then neither Burroughs nor Ginsberg was very impressed with Kerouac intellectually. Nicosia, from the evidence presented in *Memory Babe*, is.

It was rather Kerouac's glamour as a seaman that Burroughs and Ginsberg envied, just as Neal Cassady was to be more interested in the football hero than the writer. Burroughs used to question Kerouac about joining the Merchant Navy (another enjoyable image) and once suggested that Jack should wear his uniform to have an easier time seducing women. Nicosia, however, is more interested in the expressed by his mocho grit, muttering only that it was a finnish word.

If Hal Chase's remark was unsexy in bed, with so much ambition and role-envy in the air, it was to become more and more true in time, with Kerouac turning his back on the Beat hyperbole which followed publication of *On the Road* and Ginsberg and Burroughs going with it as far as it would take them; Ginsberg transforming himself effortlessly into the saintly father-figure of mainstream hippiedom and Burroughs into the devilish scientist preying on its ruin. Between them they served up the literary break-out of the 1960s that was Kerouac's ebhorred legacy as professionally as a couple of Madison Avenue image therapists.

Kerouac was disgusted by the vulgarization and distortion of his vision by the media. He was the most ambitious of them all and knew that getting your picture in the papers was mere notoriety. He wanted fame on the scale of the writers he was reading: Blake, Rimbaud, Goethe, Freud, Yeats and Spengler. (One

glance at Hart Crane through Beat eyes and you can see why they chose him as precursor, but Crane's lofty abstractions and Shelley-like beauty are controlled by an eye and ear that none of the Beats possessed.) He dreaded the overnight fame and oblivion suffered by Katharine Hepburn in *Morning Glory*, the story of a stand-in who, given the chance to perform for one night, wins instant acclaim and gains many friends who abandon her when her success fades. Superficial fame was exactly what Kerouac finally had to bear as "King of the Beats". Unfortunately for him, his life was naturally sensational, owing to the obsessive, always passive interest he took in people, places and change, the cold passion of the story-teller for whom sex, love, travel, friendship, suffering, even religion and murder were to be researched like assignments and abandoned, just as a journalist would, as soon as the story falls into his hands: "And I go home having lost her love / And write this book". It was his fascination with dangerous material which finally killed him (he had taken to picking fights in bars and refusing to defend himself and he died soon after a bar room brawl).

Quite early in his career this fascination landed him in gaol. His handsome young friend Lucien Carr - a prototype for Neal Cassady/Dean Moriarty - had killed his bothersome admirer Daniel Kammerer and Kerouac had helped him to dispose of the knife. At the trial Kerouac was envious of Lucien's position of importance in the drama and resented the off-hand way in which he was treated by the police as compared to the respectful way in which they approached Carr. Kerouac was duly locked up; his parents wouldn't bail him out, claiming he had besmirched the family name, and he had to mummy his current girlfriend to get bail money. When he arrived at her rich parents' home in a chauffeur-driven Packard, he complained petulantly: "There's no tragedy in *Crossed Pointe*. With his usual egotism he than decided that the tragedy would be his own life and yelled at the rows of manorial fronted "You're nothing but a bunch of funeral parlours".

Kerouac wanted to turn his back on the decadent East Coast end enter history, but his progress across the map of America is a series of zig-zags, usually with his mountainous mother in tow, along with all her furniture, and always in search of that little blue home in the

West where he could be both rancher and genius without killing himself on life and booze. His favourite song lyric was "I'm as corny as Kansas in August, I'm as normal as blueberry pie" - wishful thinking in the extreme.

Search for the good life is the subject of *On the Road*, which, as well as being almost anything else you can think of, is apparently "an allegory about the betrayal of America". Kerouac had fastened on the year 1848 as the year America lost her collective good sense and carefree heart. In 1848 several wagon trains had been bound West, men with their families and furniture. When gold was discovered at Stutter's Mill, many unhitched their horses, abandoned their families and raced blindly to some miserable fate. One hundred years later, Neil Cassady abandoned his family in California and raced East for the fool's gold of glitter and kicks. His madness seemed to Kerouac an exacerbated case of the same materialistic madness destroying America - the cupboard emptied for the sake of some "golden automobile". For Kerouac, the entire twentieth century was a massive gold strike, but there were still a few "old wagons" toiling West and his was among them, bound for honest labour in Colorado. One can't help wondering what might have happened to America in the 1960s and 1970s if the young had followed Kerouac's difficult, pre-hippy ideals instead of Ginsberg's and Leary's softer options.

Kerouac's life should be a gift to a biographer, and even Nicosia, for whom every creaking clothes-horse of a sentence is a painful sacrifice to his idol, can't really go wrong with material that was, after all, self-tailored by the subject. Still, neither Kerouac nor Nicosia is over-burdened with humour. Kerouac had two sacred cows: his writing and his mother. He typed *On the Road* on Japanese paper scrolls twenty-five feet long in order to preserve the impetus: "Once God moves the band, you go back and revise, it's a sin." He threw these scrolls at the feet of his publisher, like a gauntlet and was outraged by the man's unhip reservations about the MSS, which needed endless revisions. He was religious about his work. His characters were his "angels", he was their "recording angel". "Beat" meant "beatific" in his hands and he trots out beatitudes to justify every aspect of his life as an intemperate bum: all the Christian virtues taken in reverse.

Nicosia puts this down to "the emotional toll of trafficking with product of the soul" and he is probably right. His monument of reverence is innocent of irony. When he finds that Kerouac has erased some of his own drunken ramblings to record his nephew's singing, he is close to tears at this act of humility. He approaches Mémère - surely the original of Divine in "Female Trouble" - with a similar servility. Grossly antisemitic and constantly nagging her son to "get a proper job", she would have made a hilarious counter balance to the all-American anti-hero Dean Moriarty, but perhaps she was too broad a creation even for Kerouac's *histoires à clef*. One day he came into her room and found her naked. This resulted in a heart attack and she was confined to her bed and his charge for the rest of her life. The woman he called "God" had provided him with his cross, fulfilling the ancestral family motto he had so studiously unearthed in the British Museum: "Love, Work, Suffer."

Kerouac had strong puritan tendencies: self-indulgence mitigated, or rather justified, by bouts of superhuman industry. He turned against his public early on for misunderstanding the purpose of that indulgence, which for him was always Enlightenment with a capital "E": "The only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, and to talk, and to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn."

In 1961 J. Edgar Hoover decided to suppress the Beat Generation because he saw its members as champions of moral decadence and a threat to America. But Kerouac at heart was a hard-working, rather miserable mother's boy, a non-driver and a Sinatra fan rather than a fan of Elvis Presley. He disapproved of Allen Ginsberg's political engagement, believing America to be a compassionate country, not to be fought against from within. Before he died he had claimed to be Christ, Satan, Judas, various holy men, an Indian chief, and, of course, a "universal genius". According to John Clellon Holmes, these assumptions amounted to "the mile-deep final puzzle of identity that goes on in someone who can imagine all alternatives, all roles". One day towards the end of his life he saw a girl on the beach reading *On the Road*. He went up to her and claimed to be Jack Kerouac. She called the police and had him arrested.

The matrix of ambiguity

Sander L. Gilman

S.S. PRAWER
Heine's Jewish Comedy: A Study of his Portraits of Jews and Judaism
341pp. Oxford University Press. £40.
0 19815777 0

Heine is the creator of one of the most fascinating literary personae of the nineteenth century. He called him Khaim ben Shimson nka Harry aka Christian Johann Heinrich nka Henri Heine and placed his birth at the very start of the century. Heine shaped this character and used him to analyse the follies and idiosyncrasies of his age. Then time, the poet's nemesis, played the ultimate joke. In 1848, the year of the destruction of the progressive ideals which his persona had long espoused, Heine also collapsed and began, like European liberalism, a long and slow decay, though even this collapse was incorporated into his persona. Heine was also continuing a motif which he had already incorporated in his portrait of the poet in 1842, when he began his poem on the endowment of a Jewish hospital in his native city of Hamburg with the lines:

A hospital for poor, sick Jews,
for people afflicted with threefold misery,
with three evil maladies:
poverty, physical pain and Jewishness.

Heine's sickness unto death, that curse which shaped him and expressed itself in his literary creation, was his Jewish identity.

S.S. Praver, Taylor Professor of German Language and Literature at Oxford, has written a masterful study of the ambiguities attendant on the formation of that identity. His massive book is the long-awaited sequel to his monograph of 1961 on Heine's late poetry, much of which dealt with the poetry on Jewish themes. In the intervening two decades a series of biographies and monographs on Heine has appeared, presenting limited views of his Jewish self-image. Indeed, at least one excellent biography, that by Jeffrey Sammons, gives relatively short shrift to the role it played in shaping his world view. Praver's new book serves as a major corrective. But unlike a number of recent monographs in German on "Heine and the Jews" (such as those by Hartmut Kircher, Ruth Jacobi and Ludwig Rosenblum), which tend to isolate the question of his Jewish identity from the totality of his literary production, Praver manages to integrate it into an analysis of Heine's work as a whole.

Praver's method is extraordinarily productive. By limiting the field of his investigation to Heine's explicit statements about Jews and Judaism, he avoids the pitfall of seeing all of Heine's works as unmediated responses to his Jewishness. In this way a pattern emerges which sheds much light on Heine's political and ethical stance in contexts seemingly remote from the question of Jewishness. In a detailed analysis of his historical play *Almansor* (1820-22), for example, Praver shows how not only was the situation of the Moors in Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella Heine's analogy for the condition of Jews in nineteenth-century Germany, but how also, through his specific references to the Jews, he offers a parody on the problem of integration, by transferring it into a remote past.

Praver's study may serve as the paradigm for future studies of the role which literary production plays in the formation of an ethnic identity. From Moses Mendelssohn to Freud, from Zelig to Mordecai Richler, Jewish writers insecure in their ethnic identity have worked through this question in their writings. For Praver overt references to it in Heine are part of the face he author wishes to present to the anonymous "public" that grants him or her status. He draws on private utterances, in conversations and letters, to augment and amplify public statements; and is judicious in showing how these two kinds of utterance complement or contradict one another. From this self-interested basis he goes on to examine Heine's sense of self in great detail, and in doing so provides the historical matrix for the ambiguities which arise as the poet shapes his own persona.

The historical context is essential if we are to understand Heine's sense of the Jews' Jewishness. Heine's Jewish identity is not a static fact, but a dynamic process, shaped by the historical context of the 19th century. Heine's Jewish identity is not a static fact, but a dynamic process, shaped by the historical context of the 19th century.

ness. For he was a member of the first full generation to benefit (or suffer) from the civil emancipation of the Jews in Germany. The Jews were no longer the legal pariahs of central Europe, they had been given many of the civil rights of their Christian contemporaries. But there was a drawback to the liberal promise made to the Jews: "Dress like us, speak like us, become like us, and we will allow you to remain Jews." Heine's generation valiantly attempted to fulfil that promise. It founded a society for the study of the "science" of the Jews, reducing Judaism, as an orthodox critic of the movement observed, to the dusty lifelessness of a German academic library. It adopted new names, changed its mode of dress, conformed by speaking correct German (and not Yiddish, seen by the Germans as a mangled form of German), and spoke it quietly and without the "lack of logic" ascribed to the Jews. It also allowed itself to be baptized, for many professions were still reserved for non-Jews. (This is reflected in the dancing bear Atin Troll, the eponymous hero of Heine's mock-epic, who is willing to grant the Jews all civil rights, except, of course, the right to dance in the public squares, for which they have no gift.) The Jews of Heine's generation were thus permitted to remain Jews, and they quickly learnt that this meant that no matter what they did, they were treated as Jews. Anti-Jewish riots in Germany and Austria made them aware of the tenuousness of their position in European society. The liberal promise soon merged into the conservative threat: "We know you no matter what mask you wear. For us you remain the Jew."

Heine attempted to flee this world, with its contradictory images of the Jew, into the world of letters and then into the literary world of Paris, where he could assume the position of a German outsider commenting on the Germany he had left behind. Praver helps us to understand the ambiguities of being both Jew and German in Paris through a study of Heine's portraits of his fellow German Jews there. His obituaries of such men as Ludwig Börne and Ludwig Morus served as surrogates for his own unwritten autobiography. Nowhere are Praver's sensibilities better shown than in his analysis of Heine's description of the death of Marcus, the servant who spent his life in Paris, supported by the Rothschilds, writing a history of Abyssinia. Heine's sympathy for Marcus is evident; he sees in him the emblematic Jew of his time and yet, as Praver shows, one whose very death has enabled Heine to present the inner conflicts of his life. His seemingly "renitistic" account of Marcus's collapse into madness signifies the anxiety felt by the Jew over his marginal position in society, the collapse representing Marcus's "fearful awareness, deep down, that the work for which he lived, with which he employed his time, for which he had accepted financial support, might not, after all, have been worth his while; hence the discarding of his timepiece, his writing materials, his purse."

By dissecting Heine's representations of Jews, positive as well as negative, Praver shows us how they "act as a defence, by anticipating, voicing and (apparently) interiorizing the charges of anti-Semitism, thus robbing them of some of their sting". They also tell us very clearly which anti-Semitic accusations he was internalizing. One is that Jews can never truly speak or write German, for the German language, as Romantic thinkers such as Fichte were at pains to point out, is an attribute of German blood, of the tribal community, and while it could be adopted like a mask by the Jews, they could never truly possess it. This accusation was especially potent for anyone who saw his status in society as defined by the language he used. Heine had little Yiddish and less Hebrew; his language was German. Yet his contemporaries charged that he merely manipulated German, that his writing lacked Teutonic depth. He turned this criticism back on his opponents by evolving an ironic style which combines surface glitter with great depth. In this he was the forerunner of a number of Jewish writers in Europe. Praver traces "the line from Heine to Philip Roth or Woody Allen or Mel Brooks" (he could have added the black satire of Kafka or Clive Sinclair to his list).

The irony is that Heine's own irony became a

further proof for anti-Semites of Jewish superficiality. To this Heine's response, understandably, is to project the Jew hidden within on to the world about him. He creates images which embody all of the qualities ascribed to the internalized Jew in fictional figures such as Hirsch-Hyazinth and the Marchese Gumpelino, as well as in his portraits of Jewish contemporaries. He also struggles to rid himself of this internalized image through the language he uses to articulate his relationship to the Jews about him. In his private statements about Jews he can be as damning as the nastiest anti-Semite, and in such attacks one can see him distancing himself from the concept of the Jew that dominated the society he lived in.

Sartre defined the Jew as one who is perceived as a Jew. Even though critics such as Emil Fackenheim have attempted to modify this definition, it still has value as an explanation of how an ethnic identity is formed. Praver here provides us with both the historical context and the resultant image of the Jew in early nineteenth-century Germany, and then shows how Heine uses this image to understand himself and his role in society. He thus brings out the ambiguities inherent in Heine's work. For example, Praver points to the association of good food with "good taste" in Heine's portrait of the Jew. Heine associates memories of Jewish cooking with images of solace and comfort with the image of the mother. Nor is this simply a Jewish analogy with Brillat-Savarin's contemporary stress on French "good taste", for, as Praver shows, Heine was quite aware of the revival of the old slander, that Jews used Christian blood in their rituals. "Parisians joked" about the "Father Thomas cutlets" they might be offered at Rothschild's banquets, and... Adolphe Thiers talked as though the Jews' favourite dish were Capuchin friars' meat (he politely made an exception, it seems, in favour of the more civilized Jews of Paris). Heine's use of food, as a way of recalling the days when to be a Jew was to be secure within the family, must be seen as a reaction to the old anti-Semitic charge that, kosher slaughtering was cruel and inhumane.

Praver's complex portrait of Heine is made accessible through his judicious use of quotations, in his own translation, which are one of the strengths of the book: let me give one example. One of Heine's pet figures is the Jewish banker, Nascarnen, who is characterized by his mispronunciation in his set answer to every question he is asked: "Ich bab' Grind". Instead of "Ich habe Gründe" or "I have my reasons". As Praver points out, the mispronunciation of "Gründe" and "Grind" transforms the statement into "I have the mangle 'Grind'", a reference to prototypical anti-Semitic stories of Jewish uncleanness. It is not easy to convey all this to an English reader without substantial commentary, but Praver's translation is masterly: "Thin and long-nosed Mr. N. assures us that he is richly content [er habe Grind]...". This is one example out of many.

Praver's book is a milestone in the study of how aesthetic responses interact with a writer's sense of his ethnic identity. Heine is perhaps the best of all possible subjects for such a study, having long been taken, by anti- and philo-Semitic alike, as the representative German Jew. Praver does not argue this point: he sees Heine as able to articulate the conflicts inherent in being both a German and a Jew at a particular moment in history. This book is also the best introduction we have to Heine's work as a reflection of the poet's life and world, an "inner biography" written with intelligence and great subtlety. As such it may also serve as a corrective to the state of crude psycho-biographies which have appeared recently dealing with complex figures in a simplistic manner. Praver leaves Heine with his ambiguities but gives us insight into their roots.

The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook XXXVIII, 1983 (607pp. Secker and Warburg. £12.95. 0 436 25342 1) contains further papers on the topic of Jewry in the German Reich, grouped under the headings "Inflation and Depression" "The line from Heine to Philip Roth or Woody Allen or Mel Brooks" (he could have added the black satire of Kafka or Clive Sinclair to his list).

The irony is that Heine's own irony became a



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Roy Foster

ROBERT RHODES JAMES
Albert, Prince Consort
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until 1.1.84, then £15.
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ELIZABETH DARBY and NICOLA SMITH
The Cult of the Prince Consort
120pp. Yale University Press. £10.
0300 03015

"If you should meet with an inaccessible cave anywhere to which a hermit might retire from the memory of Prince Albert and testimonials to the same, pray let me know of it." Dickens's celebrated inquiry of 1864 might be echoed in 1983, surrounded as we are by exhibitions, books, a scholarly Prince Albert Society with two volumes of proceedings to its credit, conferences in German and English, and nastily jocular posters on the Underground ("Let's hope she's amused"). It may all be getting out of proportion; the exhibition at the Royal College of Art tends to be rather uneasily catch-all, and apical fine art auctions on the theme of "The Era of the Prince Consort" push his influence rather far. Reliability has become redundant; one of the signs that Robert Rhodes James's book has been a long time in the making is the slightly defensive preface, which emphasizes the underrating of Albert. He has been seen for some time by students of pageantry as the genius presiding over the fashioning of bourgeois monarchy, by historians of science as an innovative patron, and by art historians as a major influence in the English appreciation of the early Renaissance. To those studying education, leisure, public ritual, philanthropy, and "social control", it is remarkable how often the new history runs across the influence of his enquiring German. Finally, in *Who Was Oswald Reel?*, A.N. Wilson's brilliantly funny novel about the craze for the Prince Consort in the 1970s, he has ended up as a sexual icon for the 1970s.

The reevaluation has penetrated less far into the world of political history, and this is what Rhodes James – well known for his studies of boundaries and dark horses – has set out to remedy. However, he remains curiously conditioned by the criteria of a vanished age. The most formidable detractor, to be sonorously reprimanded, is seen as the "unpleasant" Mr Stachey. Byronic tags appear in the text; the secondary authorities approvingly quoted are H. A. L. Fisher, Justin McCarthy, and A. C. Benson, though a concession to modernity appears in the shape of Roger Fulford. And the whole is embellished with prose of an ornateness that sometimes defies description – Henry Hallam crossed with W. S. Churchill:

The struggles for land, possessions and titles throughout Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries afford relief and pleasure to a limited number of students of those remote controversies. Most of the boundaries which the participants contended so fiercely have themselves vanished, as have so many of the buildings and palaces they constructed and the wealth that some acquired. The pomp of armies, the vagaries of circumstance, the frowns of fortune, new attitudes to religious passions, and the attrition of time have, either singly or collectively, swept away those Duchies, Palatinates, Princeboms and Princeliches that men sought to acquire, did acquire, and ruled after their fashion. In these contests the word was less employed than the halcyon political artifices of guile, negotiation, territorial barter and the potent weapon of dynastically and politically inspired marriage. By such methods and stratagems, skillfully deployed, did some Houses rise, and by their ineptitude at these subtle and crucial crafts of constructive statecraftship did others fade and fall.

Thus the scene is set, with recurring capital for Monarchs, Ministers and Offices, and the rumble of words like "lowly" and "nightly". Theodore Martin would have recognized it at once. The drive of the narrative covers much that is equally familiar: Victoria's devouring love for her handsome cousin (at the expense of other children); their quarrels; Albert's hard-won ascendancy over Princess Leichen and the Whigs; the friendship with Peel; the triumph of the Great Exhibition; the trouble with Palmerston; exhaustion and death.

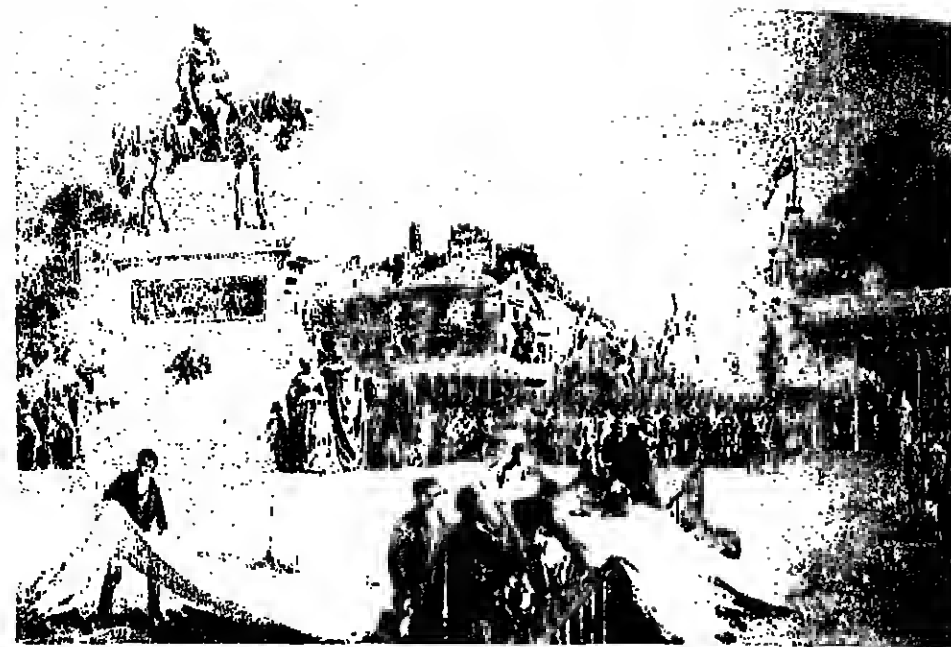
Of the recurring themes, skillfully stressed Germanism comes first to mind, and the in-

portance of liberal German ideas of what England ought to be. Stockmar appears as the vital link, influencing first Leopold and then Albert; as Rhodes James (or his Victorian spirit-voicings) insists on putting it, "it is a wise man who, embarking upon a career of political advancement, draws into his camp an adviser of sagacity and trust, linked to his fortunes not by avariciousness and vanity but by affection and regard". Leopold's Muntbatten-role towards the young royal couple remains striking, but the ideology is Stockmar's; and Rhodes James correctly indicates that Albert is representative of a whole mentality and approach characteristic of Germany in the early nineteenth century. It is his internationalism that strikes most forcibly at this remove, especially in his struggles with Palmerston (his perspicacity at the time of the Crimean War has recently been drawn attention to, by Robert Blake and others). But the liberal German idea had to reckon with English chauvinism as well as Prussian militarism, and Albert's adopted country never quite conformed to his vision.

An exotic contribution that grafted more effectively was the ideal of middle-class marriage – Christmases, seaside holidays and all. However, not for the last time, a royal consort chosen to epitomize respectable uxoriousness himself came from a spectacularly rakety background – scarred in Albert's case by adultery, divorce and syphilis. Seamy though their stories were, he remained attractively devoted to the memory of his parents and to his brother; Rhodes James convincingly infers that his subject had a much happier childhood than Victoria liked to allow. (None the less, his broad-mindedness about individual sexual peccadilloes did not prevent a readiness to use Palmerston's excesses against him when the occasion arose.) The Consort's biographer is, perhaps inevitably, rather antipathetic to the monarch, especially in her youth; he gives prominence to Stockmar's interesting description of the Prince of Wales as "an exaggerated copy of his father, but not a copy". He is, however, a little more sympathetic towards Victoria herself. The couples' quarrels over their children sometimes make chilling reading; the way that the German idea misfired over the Prince of Wales's education is told better than it has been before.

Closely connected with this was Albert's deliberate decision from the beginning to involve himself personally in English intellectual life. The knighthood for Lyell, the post at the College of Chemistry for Hofmann, the cultivation of Whewell and Sedgwick, stood for a much wider commitment to "science". (Oda might, however, conjecture more about the readiness to call in the phrenologist George Combe to examine Bertie's head; a twentieth-century dismissal of "pseudo-science" does not convey the vagaries of mid-nineteenth-century scientific understanding.) Education preoccupied Albert in every sphere, from his actions as Chancellor of Cambridge (a post whose traditionally honorific nature he at first did not realize, and then fruitfully ignored) to his desire that Gaelic should be taught in Scottish schools, and Welsh in Wales. What comes across seems the archetype of modern, self-developing man, ready to turn his hand to etching, agriculture, musical composition or architecture: Osborne epitomizes him as much as the Brighton Pavilion does the Prince Regent. With this, however, there is an intellectual complexity which is not easy to approach, seen in his preoccupation with early Renaissance "primitives" along with the most accessible of modern painters like Winterhalter and Landseer (not Turner). Perhaps this simply reflects his readiness to be influenced by yet another German mentor, Ludwig Gruner; but Albert's mind and taste deserve more analysis than those of most royals, not least because they look back as well as forward.

This is, however, far from being an intellectual biography; most of Rhodes James's delving has been in the Royal Archives, and where he puts it to best effect is the political arena. The celebrated joint access to the dispatch-boxes (now a television-series cliché) is rather passed over, but early exchanges with Melbourne, and the memoranda of Albert's secretary Anson, provide a fascinating introduction to the foundations of the Consort's influence and the extent of his ambition. Why are Prince's alone to be denied the credit of



"Unveiling of the Scottish National Memorial to Prince Albert, Edinburgh" by W. Simpson, from The Cult of the Prince Consort, reviewed here.

having political opinions based upon an anxiety for the national interests and honour of their country and the welfare of mankind?" he mused. "Is the sovereign not the natural guardian of the honour of his country, is he not necessarily a politician?" As Rhodes James shows, Albert did not replace Victoria's dangerous partialities with the ideal of the monarch above politics; he simply went about things in a different way, which might have done more to extend the oblique powers of the monarchy than anything else. The story could be read in terms of a Jamesian loss of innocence; rather like George III, who perforce learned to use the "faction" he despised – though that is not how it appears here. We see Albert backing Peel, receiving private advice from him out of office, inspiring editorials in *The Times*, longing for the Foreign Office; eventually becoming what his biographer rather hyperbolically calls "the most astute and ambitious politician of the age". When his widow in 1886 urged her outgoing Tory ministers to "agitate in every village" against the policy of the incoming administration, Albert might have been appalled at her indiscretion, but not at her commitment.

The "informal but potent member of every cabinet" succumbed, probably to typhoid, in 1861 (Rhodes James does not hypothesize about the other possible causes of death which have been canvassed.) By then his influence on small and great affairs of state, within and without the Royal Household, had become tremendous; and he was, as Rhodes James effectively reminds us throughout, extraordinarily young (twenty-eight when he began attempting to reorganize Cambridge, thirty when he started planning the Great Exhibition). He was also prematurely worn, exhausted and depressed: "I do not cling to life", he accurately remarked. He had never quite meshed with his adopted people, never acquiring the art of casualness (in Bagehot's phrase, "be bad not the knack of dropping seed with-

out appearing to sow it"). However, like most of the English, he disliked pomposity, and after the Great Exhibition the thought of a statue in his likeness appalled him. There is a splendid irony, therefore, in the spectacular public cult which followed his death, which is the subject of an absorbing study by Elizabeth Darby and Nicola Smith. While sometimes tending towards a catalogue, their book places the myths and works of the craze for Albertiana firmly in context, and discusses, among much else, the contemporary theories of "recognition is heaven" as well as the plethora of techniques and innovations which Albert's memorials so appropriately encouraged. Fashions for the High Renaissance (Raphael in particular), Anglo-Saxonism, anti-Catholicism, and even medievalism were given free play; the authors are very good indeed on the Albert Memorial, with its distant precursors in Rome and its immediate anticipation in Manchester.

Their short study, profusely and imaginatively illustrated, hangs as an interesting pendant to Rhodes James's inescapably ponderous study, and focuses once again on Albert's reputation. "Why was it that when Prince Albert died the nation felt it had suffered a loss heavy and irreparable?" asked *The Times* when attacking the Albert Memorial. As so often, the editorial went on to get it exactly wrong by attributing its importance not to tastes like the promotion of art and science, but to the fact that "so princely an example of purity of life could ill be spared by a wealthy and luxurious age and society". The Consort's achievements are more interesting than that, though they come about partly because he grasped so decisively the unrivaled opportunities for influence that came his way through marriage (Stockmar again: "Nature existed before the constitution"); and partly because he was better educated, better travelled, more cultured and far more diligent than the mid-Victorian public men among whom he has finally taken his place.

Concentrated barrage

Alan Bell

THOMAS PINNEY (Editor)
The Selected Letters of Thomas Babington Macaulay
371pp. Cambridge University Press. £19.50.
0521 240093

Thomas Pinney's exemplary complete edition of Macaulay's letters was published in six volumes between 1974 and 1981. In this selection the annotation is abandoned completely, to be replaced by good general and sectional biographical introductions, a chronological table and a genealogical table. Technically, this abbreviation has worked quite well; although the eye is from time to time disturbed by an unexpected space where a superscript number has been blanked out, and the proof-reader's lines show themselves rather too often on a page that still echoes the typographical elegance of the original.

The selection works well, too, as an epistolary presentation. The texts can be read in their complete form, not as edited by Sir George Otto Trevelyan for the *Life and Letters* of 1898. Selection has if anything increased the concentration of emotion that Macaulay was inclined to pour into his most intimate letters, and the closeness of his family relationships may be seen all the more poignantly. The absence of any explanatory matter on the page would have been a disadvantage with many letter-writers, but the pace of Macaulay's prose makes it unnecessary to pause much and inquires who got an appointment that is being discussed, or whether a reported illness resulted in a death. One is in fact confronted by an agreeable barrage which may well reflect something of the notorious forcefulness of Macaulay's conversational manner. Scholars will need to use the full edition, which will also be necessary to satisfy the general reader's curiosity on specific points, but this plain-text selection has a special value in its own right.

Shivering timbers

David Profumo

GEORGE MACDONALD FRASER
The Pyrates
413pp. Collins. £9.95.
00222 7878

The most notable features of most piratical careers, historically considered, were sex-related disease and brevity. The image received through literature, however, is richer and altogether more attractive: the devil-may-care swash-buckler is a composite fiction filtered down through Defoe, Stevenson, Barrie and, more recently, Sbatini – and, not surprisingly, it is the latter tradition that is preferred by George MacDonald Fraser, the legendary one unspooled until the social historians interfered. "History is very much what you want it to be", he declares with Flashman's panache, and quite right too. As well as trading on every conceivable myth about pirates, and unashamedly scrambling decades of facts, the novel also draws on many authentic background details, so that, like any good burlesque, it offers at times as affectionate nostalgia for the subject of its own spoof.

Much of the comedy springs from sudden anachronism, for the pedigree of *The Pyrates* also embraces the familiar stereotypes from movies; characters are consistently referred to in terms of their screen counterparts, Fairbanks, Gable and Flynn. Escapes are stressed to be Hollywood set-pieces, and deflation is the order of the day with the aura of period detail constantly punctured by modern brand-names that explode illusion: "rapier clenched 'twixt flawless teeth, the light of battle in his eye and the taste of brasso in his mouth". Profound predicaments and impossible levels of improbability result in a rollicking, frolicking, rollicking and totally implausible epic.

It begins, look'ee, with the cast converging, in classic film fashion, for a sea-voyage in the Twelve Apostles sailing out of London some time shortly after the Restoration. By process of change, cut and pan we are shown this motley crew assembling: top billing goes to matinee idol Benjamin Avery, the twenty-two-year old

superhero (former head-prefect, BA Oxon) armed with Boy Scout morality and virginal self-control. Into his hands has been entrusted (cameo role by S. Pepsy here) a fabulously valuable crown which he must convey secretly to the ruler of Madagascar. His supporting players include Colonel Blood (he of the Crown Jewels), a dastardly wheeler, and Lady Vanity Rooke, a pouting blonde who falls for Avery – as does Sheba, the black pirate queen in shackles below deck, a thigh-kicked Barn-barella with a Cartier-lilted rapier and a line in lasciviousness that has everyone scuttling for cold showers.

Sheba is part of an international Brotherhood of pirates, and her colourful camarades waylay the ship, carve the crown up into six pieces and, leaving passengers and crew in various plights, head off to different parts of the globe, the rotters. This makes Avery's honour-saving mission to reunite the fragments something of a prolonged and tricky one, his adventures leading him from Libertalia (an un-DeVotian piracy) to the South American jungle. In the process he encounters Don Lardo the diabolical, tarantula-totting Viceroy; a gibbering castaway named Solomon Shafto; and Bilbao, a pirate aspiring to gentry, and his miniature peg-legged toady, Goliath. It's a heady rumfustian of a plot, but getting befuddled is part of the fun.

Each scene is teeming with extras, every one dressed up to the nines and schooled in the art of coarse acting, with a diploma in buck-speak. There is a constant groundswell of piratical catcalls: "Bugs! I first... Bool Who'd ha' thought it!... Where's the purser's office, Jack?" and with some of the bit parts enthusiasm spills over into gibberish, "Wi' a will, an' yarely, an' bedammed, an' that. What, lads?" Despite feeling obliged to live up to their legendary ferocity, they are for the most part quite a pleasant gang of coves, and most of the timbers-shivering bloodthirstiness remains verbal fantasy in true pantomime style. Things do hot up towards the end – heads roll, torturers cackle, ketchup dribbles – but on the whole it's delightfully U-rtericate stuff, and full of surprises. An' ye may lay to that; wi' a wannion.

Fulgurating in Fitzrovia

Anne Duchêne

MARY KEENE
Mrs Donald
Edited by Alice Thomas Ellis.
128pp. Chatto and Windus/Hogarth Press. £7.95
(paperback, £3.50).
0701 2749 X

Mary Keene died of cancer in 1981, at the age of sixty. This little book found no publisher in the early 1950s when it was written, and comes to us now as a piece of rather complex filial filly, with an "epilogue" by her daughter, Alice Keene.

This tells us, with exemplary brevity, how Mary Keene was a child of poverty in the East End streets; how she was early and easily, because of her beauty and spirit, co-opted into the kinder latitudes of Fitzrovia; married and divorced the film producer Ralph Keene; and maintained a long-standing relationship with the painter Matthew Smith, who made her his heir when he died in 1959. Her many friends in that time and place – the Henry Greens, Louis MacNiece, with whom she fell violently in love though "nothing came of this passion" – included Caitlin Thomas; and the poet's mother, Dylan Thomas, rather scorned his combs and bags of sweets. Alice Keene remembers a cottage bought at Lougharn, "for school holidays".

Anyone hoping for a nostalgic little *roman à la mode* will be disappointed, however. Essentially, the book is a very private study about three women – a mother and her daughters, caught in a vicious self-perpetuating spiral of emotional and physical violence from which there is at first no one to rescue them. Mrs Donald, the neurotic, hymn-singing, house-proud tyrant, is a woman whose vitality and frustration make her a formidable force on her daughters of

which she very seldom becomes aware. Violet, the elder daughter – several sons remain peripheral, in male immunity – is sliding out into sex-mongering the late thirties, but is going to be trapped by pregnancy into a short-shrift marriage much like her mother's; Rose, the little girl, still has to be the victim of the emotional and physical battering, though nursing already a fierce, destructive kernel of self. They all live at an extremity of feeling, untethered by anything or anybody.

It does not come as a surprise to learn that the book was very slowly written. Each short chapter has to be unpeeled from the one below, like a skin. It does not matter, either, if one reads the book without even suspecting that "some years after she started to write", the author conceived the idea of her three figures as the same person at different times; their kinship is already well enough established. Nor does it matter if one doesn't notice this chiming with *Four Quartets*, by which the author was much influenced at the time (and what a pity the editor allows "Unto" into the lines from "East Coker", where Eliot was using exact

Survivors

Anyone could batter down the ferns with their weak, supplicant fronds unfurling and bending to the prevailing wind. In dry weather fire wipes out whole acres of them.

But under your feet the new shoots are inexorable, bumping up, hard as beads, they fist into hooks, into question marks, simulating meekness all over the earth.

CONNIE BENSLEY

Multi-storeyed

Joanna Motion

EMMA TENNANT
Woman Beware Woman
176pp. Cape. £7.95.
0224 021648

There are three principal women who need to beware each other in Emma Tennant's new novel: widow, daughter-in-law and the young woman who wanted to marry the other son. Their male partners, whose existence nominally defines these relationships, stay in the background. Indeed, the father is recently dead, active only in recollection and in the corrosive effect of his memory; one son is absent for all but the book's denouement; and the other is an uneasy neutral. The women spin the plot and the men make the corpses. The scheme they are caught up in is a conspiracy for revenge.

Woman Beware Woman is set in contemporary southern Ireland, in a paradisaical landscape of fuchsia lanes and a cliff-top Satis House. While his wife Moura paints the sen and rocks, Hugo, the Nobel-contending novelist, charms the bachelors in Ryan's bar and entrances his Anglo-Irish and American neighbours even though he pillories them in his books: he calls them Lady Sloth, Rex Envy, the Earl of Greed. When Hugo takes his crusade for justice off the page and puts it into practice, trying to defend an appealing local woman against her abusive and crooked husband, he ends up dead in the woods his wife loves to paint. Moura wants his death avenged. Indirectly, mending other ends, the two younger women avenge her plans along. The final outcome is not quite what any of them had in mind.

The story comes to us in layers via Minnie, the childhood visitor to the household whose engagement to the elder son failed to carry her into the safety of marriage within Hugo and Moura's family. Her narrative starts with an outline, still coloured by the child's idyllic and certain picture of life at Cliff Hold. In the second section of the book, she goes over the ground again, filling in the detail. The nearer focus makes it increasingly apparent that Minnie has been misled: she takes decisions on

wrong information. Hugo's impermeable family life had disintegrated; his lovelessness had ruinous limits; and the semi-feudal camaraderie of the village coexists with an indulgence for lawbreakers which shades easily into a similar tolerance of terrorism.

Not only that, Minnie is herself an unreliable narrator, letting out distracting clues to the unravelling of the thriller-plot. From the first she is clumsy and self-deprecating. Romantic Minnie says yes to everything and takes the tip-up seat in taxis. But she gradually reveals herself as not so much an inoffensive day-dreamer as mentally precarious. This is not the passionate and venomous mania of *The Bad Sister* or the adolescent disorientation of *Queen of Stones*. It is a domesticated derangement, which surfaces eventually as the power of the weak over the strong, the incompetent asserting itself slyly over the capable.

For Minnie's narration, Emma Tennant uses her characteristic and powerful skill of getting at the distinct delineation of motive and import through multi-storey fantasy. Minnie starts to identify characters with one another: Moura with her own mother; herself with Fran, the "real" daughter-in-law (one shoots with a camera, the other more lethally); her former fiancé with his father (Hugo lies dead in the leaves where she lay with his son). Reinterpretation of the past is superimposed on the events of the present. "What happens if you walk into your own memory?" wonders Minnie. Minnie walks not only into memory but also, as understanding breaks on her, into her metaphors, a collision of tenses, and obsessively in and out of the hunting scene in tapestry which hangs on her bedroom wall.

It's as if I was determined to walk into the tapestry that hangs opposite me as I write – where already, through the trees, I see the sloping hill down to Blackstone, the formal stitching of the vegetables in the garden, the pale billow of the marquee where they serve lemonade and food. As I go I see the change of movements of the people on the wall – the hunters and the hunted and the wayfarers who get caught up by accident in the final stages of the kill.

By now it is no surprise that a new Tennant novel should be hard to categorize. *Woman Beware Woman* is a past detective story, part sexual machination, part exploration of how a small community reacts under pressure. Emma Tennant moves fluently between genres, and although there is the occasional awkwardness in following her, she makes compulsive both the untangling of the conspiracy and the far-ranging precision of her language.

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COMMENTARY

In the artist's shoes

Lucy Ellmann

Hockney's Photographs
Hayward Gallery, until February 5

A sign photographed by Hockney somewhere in Utah reads:

YOU MAKE THE PICTURE

The Great White Throne challenges photographers, amateurs and professionals alike... Let your imagination guide your lens. Remember that your camera only records what it's pointed at - you make the picture.

David Hockney has been travelling the world, pointing his camera at things. His new photographs, which he calls "joiners", are kaleidoscopic collages of numerous photographs of single scenes, arranged either in strict white-lined grid patterns or in free-flowing shapes which bend themselves to their subject matter.

Hockney has used photography for about twenty years as a muse or, according to the introductory notes for the exhibition, as an "aide-mémoire" for his painting (some of these early photographs are on show). The resulting semi-realist paintings of friends and swimming-pools have won him stupendous acclaim: in Britain no doubt because they depict sunny climates, and in America perhaps because the artist is British. They possess the flatness and placidity associated with work based on photographs. But Hockney's snapshots no longer require the apology of subsequent paintings and he has at last tired of his careful preservation in paint of momentary visual phenomena like splashing water. Attacking the problem at its source, he now abhors the frozen moments of conventional photography and has discovered in his "drawing with the camera", as he calls it, an element of time and narration.

A naked man with a sun-tanned bottom propped himself this way and that with an awkward breast stroke in a Californian swimming pool. The same man in bed in Japan looks out of a window at a view of a Japanese garden, then back at Hockney. In Hawaii, music starts up, people get married, they kiss. Unlike a snapshot, a joiner can deal in its peculiar way with action of any length, and can devote space to marginal matters such as interesting foliage or wooden floors without diminishing its main subject. An excellent vehicle for characterization, then, a joiner is most rewarding when a human subject has been snapped in various attitudes during the course of a conversation or other spatially limited activity.

Changes of camera angle create a Cubist three-dimensionality in these slightly disorientating scenes from everyday jet-set life. But

uncharacteristic of Cubism, still-life subjects such as "Yellow chair with shadow" - a straightforward picture of a sun-lit chair - make dull joiners. Static landscape scenes too, although sometimes redeemed by changes in light or cloud formations, veer towards the dreaded holiday snap, as in a large joiner of the Grand Canyon, in which the joins recall the oddly unconvincing quality of the moon's surface constructed from satellite photographs.

His lack of control over aspects of the photographic process has had a liberating effect on snap-happy Hockney. In substitution for a painter's involvement with his medium, Hockney's collage style and the autobiographical details contained in his photographs have allowed subjectivity to creep in. He uses joiners to make personal statements. "Steering Wheel", a joiner of the dashboard of his car, is given a much more rectangular, while pictures of a British Embassy luncheon in Tokyo are arranged in jittery fashion, as if Hockney were a little the worse for wear after the brandy.

There are humorous touches - rarely noticeable in Hockney's paintings. In one collage, the artist's mother is encased in an aquatic-blue raincoat, from which only feet and face emerge. Hockney finds feet in general comical: several photographs of footprints in the snow lead the eye to the distant figure of a fellow photographer in "Photographing Annie Leibowitz while she's photographing me". Repeated socks, one red, one black, form a border around an infinity of pebbles in a Kyoto Zen infinity of pebbles in a Kyoto Zen garden. Hockney's feet appear often, since they serve as reminders of the part played by the photographer in making photographs - thus the voyeuristic spectator is put in the artist's shoes. But the photographs of empty Kodak film packets, deposited like animal droppings around Hockney territory, are less subtle testimonies to photography's facts of life, and should have been put straight into "Colloidal trash cans where they belong."

With such whimsical effects, Hockney claims to be conducting a critique of photography, yet his pictures celebrate even the plastic sheen of the snapshot as it glimmers among similar glossy squares. It is paradoxical, to say the least, that, having previously relied on photography to help him avoid any impression of animation, Hockney now enthusiastically proclaims itself conquered by his joiners. And in his use of unsophisticated techniques, which include getting films developed at his local One-Hour Photomat, Hockney may well inspire ordinary mortals to do some drawing - with Polaroid, scissors and paste.

Flicks and twitches

Antonia Phillips

Raoul Dufy 1877-1953
Hayward Gallery, until February 5

Much of Raoul Dufy's painting shows us, from a restful distance, from high above, or through an airy window, places where people gather in festive commotion - racenurses, regattas, rosy plush theatres, promenades lined with feathery palms, a river's edge during a hot-race. His best paintings, of the 1920s and early 1930s, are of the sea, of harbours and bays, sailboats huddling in marinas, studio interiors; they have a singular gem-like quality, especially when viewed from afar - something which the arrangement of the Hayward Gallery's exhibition often allows one to do - and it is easy to see why they enjoy such popularity. In other respects, however, the exhibition is less judicious. Since one Dufy does not give much insight into another, there is no benefit to be gained from so vast a display; more often than not, good paintings are here eclipsed by their less successful neighbours.

Dufy's sense of colour rarely fails him, and because of it his pictures yield up their pleasures very directly. This strength was manifested early in his career, when, arriving in Paris from his native Le Havre, he was exposed to the experiments of Braque and Derain, and to the impact of Van Gogh and Gauguin retrospectives (1901, 1906): abandoning his Boudin-esque palette and impressionist handling of subject, he painted street and beach scenes bright with banners and advertisement hoardings, with the hurly-burly of crowding figures, or of people dancing under striped marquees. Already Dufy applies his paint with assurance, thickly spreading *fauve* colours and dark outlines; his talent for blues and greens is evident, but so is a predilection for hatching and twiddly arabesques (often to uncertain purpose), and a compulsion to clog and clutter. The years of apprenticeship show him experimenting ambitiously in the shadow of others, and not afraid to be tasteless - witness his huge *baigueses*, whose coy attitudes and *maitre* bathing costumes are ridiculously at odds with their monumental primitiveness, their crudely hatched limbs and black slit-eyes. Dufy is most at ease with the human body when it is clothed - a few deft liquid strokes evoke the posturing of the elegant, the flutter and droop of dresses; or when a nude is just another element in the clutter of the studio, unlit, given no prominence in the pattern of line and colour, as in "Les deux moules".

(1930) and "L'artiste et son modèle" (1929).

In the 1920s Dufy developed a distinctive, often humorous way of drawing his motifs in quick, fluid outline over generous, subtly structured patches of brilliant colour. Cerise and cobalt blues, greens tinged by anything strident or acid, refresh the eye with purely visual, non-tactile reverberations. Sometimes there is mystery, too, as in the twilight views of Sainte-Adresse, and other night paintings. Occasionally Dufy succeeds in evoking the sensation of sheer colour and light. In part this is achieved by not allowing distance to diminish intensity of hue, by letting butterflies as big as the cargo ships float on the same patch of colour, by placing the horizon high up the canvas. In a small beach scene of the early 1920s, transparent figures on the shore are dwarfed by the dark sea rising up the canvas, and we seem to see the world simultaneously from the air and from knee-level. In other paintings breezes chop the water's surface (when it's not clogged with black wavelets) and puff the clouds; sail-boats scatter to make way for chunkier vessels.

In contrast to his sureness with colour, Dufy's compositional judgment is less robust. It is curious that he was so drawn to mural decorations, since he is most to danger from his tendency to spoil a composition - or disguise a poor one - with superfluous calligraphic flourishes when working a large scale. He is more successful with motifs which have a strong natural structure: the ellipses of bays and racetracks, the crescents of promenades and piers vanishing up into the horizon, the enclosing lines of a room or window, the verticals and diagonals of masts and hulls controlling the serpentine lines of flapping sails. A shallow concave space or great distance is suggested by the curve of ceiling or horizon. Too often, line in Dufy merely delineates (there is a hint of fashion drawing), and does not invite a feeling eye. Sadly, he succumbs to pointless flicks and twitches of the brush, and to a naive flipperiness. These habits, exasperating in many oil-paintings, are less noticeable in the watercolours, and are positively harnessed in his very fine designs for fabrics, where repetition controls the ornate arabesques and his *telinoif* - shells, butterflies, birds, etc - acquires an artful charm.

The catalogue of the exhibition, *Raoul Dufy 1877-1953* (185pp. Hayward Gallery, £9.95, 0 7281 0381 5), contains two general introductions to Dufy and his work by Bryan Robertson and Sarah Wilson, together with essays on his fabrics, murals, book illustration and ceramics.

Chastity and austerity

David Matthews

JENAMIN BRITTEN
The Rape of Lucretia
Coliseum

The supreme interpretation in art of the rape of Lucretia is currently on show in the Royal Academy's *Genius of Venice* exhibition. In Titian's late painting every particle of the terrified Lucretia's flesh tautens as, dagger in hand, Tarquin bears down on her. But the violence of the represented act is confounded by the way Titian has painted it. His colours glow with unassumed splendour, making this painting also one of his most compelling celebrations of sensuality. In their rape scene, Britten and Ronald Duncan touch on similar ambiguities: "In the forest of my dreams / You have always been the Tiger", Lucretia sings after Tarquinus has kissed her awake; and it is suggested that her inability to come to terms with the darker side of her sexuality is an important reason for her suicide. Britten's music, while evoking any hint of Titian's voluptuousness (Titian's musical equivalent is surely Wagner), makes tentative explorations into the Dionysian dark. But Apollo presides over most of *The Rape of Lucretia*, underlining what the opera is really about: chastity. Lucretia's light as well as a virgin; her love for her husband Collatinus is "too rare / For life to tolerate or false forbear from soiling" and she cannot accept his plea that Tarquinus' violation of their love may be forgiven and forgotten. Ooe can imagine Bernard Shaw, if he had reviewed the opera, getting extremely irritated at this point at the opportunity for a sensible, happy ending being rejected. Here, as elsewhere in Britten, it is hard to give one's whole sympathy, so willingly do his victims seem to welcome their death.

Within the limits of her presentation as a *passive victim*, the musical portrait Britten draws of Lucretia is masterly. His restraint is at its most telling when, robbed for death, she appears before Collatinus and stands silent while, from the orchestra, the cor anglais speaks for her in music reminiscent of a comparable to the Bach Passions. The influence of the Passions here is not an isolated one;

Sentimental slavery

Simon Berry

THOMAS SOUTHERNE
Oroonoko
Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow

This Restoration 'tragi-comedy', dating from 1665, regularly filled theatres in the eighteenth century and provided a celebrated leading role in the Othello mould: (its last major revival was in 1932 with Sir Ralph Richardson).

Oroonoko's success was put down to its appeal to the ladies, and its sentimental side is readily apparent from the following synopsis. Oroonoko, a captive black prince of noble mien, is reunited with his wife Imoinda, but her beauty is besieged by the unspeakable Governor-General to whom Oroonoko is enslaved. An abortive revolt by the slaves seals the fate of both (in fact all three, since Oroonoko kills the Governor as well as himself, though not in this production).

The events of the story are adapted from the novel by Aphra Behn but the play Southerne intermingles a judicious sub-plot of two disappointed sisters who arrive in the East Indies to hunt for husbands, among the tobacco plantations. A contemporary of Southerne's rated the novel as "loose and contemptible."

Disgraced with this tragic, it is in a still higher degree preposterous. Regrettably this judgment rather than the play has stood the test of time.

Philip Prowse's production spares no efforts in making Oroonoko from the grave. The Chinese stage is wonderfully transformed into an atmospheric, shiny town made from pine and bamboo and corrugated iron bleached

the Male and Female Chorus narrate the story, place it in a Christian context and moralize just as the Evangelist moralizes in the Passions. Almost everyone has found this Christianizing in *Lucretia* hard to take: it seems forced and irrelevant. Duncan has borne most of the blame for this and certainly the Eliotic pseudo-profundities of his libretto do not help. In his memoir, *Working with Britten*, however, Duncan claimed that the Christian emphasis was as much Britten's responsibility as his: the epilogue, for instance, was added at Britten's specific request. This rings true: Britten was committed to art with a Christian message as the procession of "Christian" works from *A Boy Was Born* to the Church Parables testifies. But *Lucretia* will always fit uneasily into the canon, and one will always leave a performance with one's pity and fear tempered by embarrassment.

The work's air of post-war austerity (it was composed in 1946) is well matched by Graham Vick's spare new production for the English National Opera. This is mounted on the same projecting stage as his recent *Ariadne* and employs an absolute minimum of props. Russell Craig has devised a gantry, which moves backwards and forwards and is equipped with Japanese sliding screens to reveal or conceal the cast. There is effective use of silhouettes projected on to the closed screens. Everything is in muted colours. Male and Female Chorus, raised above the others on the gantry platform, are dressed in sober 1940s suits; but if, as one suspects, the other characters are meant to be timeless, then the men's modern battledress is distracting. As Lucretia, Jean Rigby starts with the handicap of inevitable comparison with her two most distinguished predecessors, Kathleen Ferrier and Janet Baker. She cannot match their majesty of tone, but she does contribute a touching innocence which is, in fact, truer to the role as it is conceived. The cast is strong throughout and if one has to single out anyone else it should be Anthony Rolfe-Johnson's superbly clear Male Chorus. Stuart Bedford directs the chamber orchestra from the piano with an authority that derives from his many years of association with Britten at the Aldeburgh Festival. The score has its own grave beauty; in the end, as so often, it is the quality of its music that will keep this opera alive.

Into dusty monochrome. Palpable realism stretches to a pair of field guns on a sandy foreshore and a brood of chickens nesting on a balcony. With the stage uncharacteristically quiet for a Prowse production, the atmosphere of repression and sadism is made flesh in a nasty bunch of slave-owners sporting Panama hats and reflecting sunglasses. The mass of slaves (necessary for the ill-fated rising in Act IV) is reduced to two figures bent in mute prostration, with foreheads in the sand, for most of the action.

Unfortunately this production tries to make the play into an anti-slavery diatribe, with one character (Blaaford) dressed as a frock-coated Evangelical *à la* Wilberforce. In fact, Oroonoko himself defends the slave trade as "honest" and is only moved to lead the revolt at the prospect of his royal line being born into servitude. Some are born to rule and the rest to suffer in uncomplaining silence. It is difficult for a modern audience to view a character equipped with this practical philosophy as a tragic hero.

To his credit Jeffrey Kissoon invests Oroonoko with great dignity and squeezes some beauty from the fustian verse. He is ably abetted by a powerful performance from Laurence Rudge as Aboan, the friend who persuades him to lead the revolt. Johanna Kirby adds a touch of Lady Macbeth in Imoinda beneath the Desdemona character that Southerne provides. Despite dedicated treatment from director and cast, and some fine stage effects, *Oroonoko* is not really worth reviving as it stands. Perhaps a more period presentation, emphasizing empty artifice in the sub-plot and giving Oroonoko his head with the melodrama, would succeed better. Or perhaps not.

COMMENTARY

Socio-religious

Peter Kemp

Frank Delaney
BBC2

Given the calibre of many of its guests, *Frank Delaney* ought to be a very telling talk show. That it's often the reverse is partly due to its presentation, partly to the format. Interviewing authors, Frank Delaney regularly brings in so much soft soap as to reduce proceedings to a wash-out, while the programme's penchant for dealing with writers in threes can, paradoxically, prove limiting. With discussion confined to supposedly shared - and usually stereotyped factors - the author's individuality stays out of range. This common-factor approach dictated that a recent edition in which Muriel Spark featured was increasingly bedevilled by Catholic concerns. Insisting that she is "a very singular writer", the programme didn't allow her to be the single interviewee. Harriet Waugh and A. N. Wilson were added on the dubious grounds that "both have Catholicism in their veins". As a result, discussion slid disappointingly away from the literary to the liturgical.

Yet the programme had opened promisingly. Allan Massie, on film, made useful points about Muriel Spark's background and fictional concerns. He touched on her detachment as a writer, relating it both to her present life as an "exile" in Italy and her long-established taste for dandy literary procedures. And he concluded by indicating what he sees as her major strength: an ability to steer a skilful course between realism and fantasy. Massie had no opportunity to elaborate on this, but he is surely right in observing that it is what gives Muriel Spark's work its distinctive quality: not merely in the way vividly realized settings can be disconcertingly invaded by the other-worldly - spirit voices, a man with demon-like horns, a woman whose shadow falls wrongly - but, more substantially, in that her novels combine the satisfactions of artistic documentary with elegant, un-litlike patterning.

Despite some rather grandiose questioning from Frank Delaney - admirably, she didn't dry up even when asked, "How would you describe the spring in you that your work flows from?" - Muriel Spark spoke with resolute matter-of-factness about the importance to her of narrative tone, the difference between her prose and poetry, the writing routine she follows. Eventually, the topic of her Catholicism arose. And she explained, as she has often done before, that her conversion had "a releasing effect", initiating "a great deal of prolific inspiration". Why this was so wasn't followed up - though it would have led into the heart of her writing. For Catholicism gave Muriel Spark her fictional aesthetic. After her conversion, she "began to see life as a whole rather than as series of disconnected happenings". After it, too, she began - with astonishing fertility: seven novels, a play and two collections of short stories in seven years - to produce fiction in which life is seen as a series of elaborately interconnected happenings. What she particularly appreciated about Catholicism, she has stated, is that it afforded a scheme of things in which there is no waste; everything being part of a plan. Her intensely economic novels mirror this: which is why she can think of them as offering "glimpseps that seem like a microcosm of reality".

Any possibility of the programme's exploring how a theological frame of reference supplied the imaginative matrix for accomplished fiction vanished with the advent of one of the studio guests. Religious allegiance for A. N. Wilson, it appeared, is largely a matter of ritual and performance, closer to an ostentatious *jeu* than the leap of faith. Amusedly revealing his whimsical ways, he explained that he now conforms to Anglicanism on the grounds that it's not too vulgarly vernacular and, as an Englishman married to the granddaughter of a Dean, he feels he owes it "loyalty". A discomfiting asperity in Muriel Spark's responses made it very clear that she is far from sharing this high camp churchmanship. Ironically, religiously-engaged as providing common ground for the writers - most emphatically brought out the differences between them.

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Letters

hypothesis "notorious"? - a hypothesis to the effect that every possible proposition can be expressed in any language. In an independently formulated but related contribution to the same volume (ibid, 445-55), H. D. Steklis and I propose and defend the thesis that *complete* (ie, arbitrarily close) intertranslatability (with, say, English) can be taken as the criterion for whether a given symbol system is a language at all. Harris's own "glossability" criterion, that a completely untranslatable system is not a language, seems to be a weak, negative special case of this. But of course it is the intermediate cases - between complete translatability and complete untranslatability - that are of interest here. Can such exist?

I happen to have as much difficulty imagining a language in which *anything* I say in English cannot be said as I do imagining one in which *everything* I say in English cannot be said. Vocabulary may be lacking, but that can be coined as needed; and long circuitous descriptions can be mobilized where compact names won't suffice. (This is a variant of the world-for-word theme.) One begins to get a sense of the powerful and apparently limitless resources of linguistic approximation, from within-language translation - definition and paraphrase - not to mention the innumerable ways one can relate a thought in words in the first place.

But perhaps the only convincing form of the translatability thesis is a challenge, to allow me

to make it: Let anyone who thinks that there is something that cannot be said in English or another language write me (in English) just what it is and why it is untranslatable, and I will show how a translation can be devised out of the very information provided me!

Where does all this (if true) leave literary translation? It goes without saying that if the "music of meaning" refers to onomatopoeic, rhythmic, alliterative and other acoustic features, including rhyme and puns, they will indeed be lost in translation. So will many other formal and stylistic features that supervene on meaning and do not happen to be shared by the two languages in question. But when it comes to meaning (that is to say, content) itself, although nothing can be guaranteed about the elegance, the musicality or the economy of the form in which it is conveyed, it can be approximated as closely as one desires (or has the wit for); even to the point of making dogged, direct references to the superfluous features of the original.

By way of example, consider James Grigley's pun, in the same symposium, on the notoriously "untranslatable" title of Proust's great work: *A la recherche du temps perdu*. How about searching for (but also in search of, re-creating, remembering, and attempting to reconstruct and recapture) *lost* (but also *lost*, forgotten, wasted, *time*, but also *time*) "meaning" (meaning, sense, *rhyme*, *imag*, *time*) in French?

Awkward? Yes. Inept? No doubt. Literary? Hardly. Word-for-word? Who ever promised that? But a "literal" translation nonetheless, approximating what one can discern of the intended meaning as closely as one could ask... or should I go on?

STEVEN HARNAD,
The Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 20 Nassau Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08540.

Microforms

Sir, - A. P. Woolrich (Letters, November 11) complains about his inability to obtain microform copies of research materials on inter-library loan. The picture is not as black as he has painted it, and it may be useful for others as well as him if the British Library's contribution to availability of microforms is described.

It is unfortunately true that many libraries that acquire microforms are not prepared to lend them. This is one reason why the British Library has devoted considerable resources to buying and making available research collections in both roll microfilm and microfiche. For almost twenty years the Lending Division has been collecting such materials on a large scale, scientific, technical and educational research reports, mainly from the United States, constitute a large part of the collection, but other important acquisitions include British and American doctoral dissertations, and a host of special research collections covering fields

diverse topics as trade unionism, censorship in Tsarist Russia, Mozart's complete works, French politics, maps, early Quaker writers, and British political history. A complete list of such collections has recently been published by the Division under the title *Microform Research Collections at the British Library Lending Division*. One hundred and eighty-three collections are listed, some of which contain hundreds of reels of film or thousands of fiches. Sadly, this material is little used.

As for back files of periodicals, the Lending Division spends considerable sums each year on extending its holdings in response to demand. Hard copy is usually purchased but if it is not available microfilm or microfiche is an acceptable substitute. This film is willingly copied or lent to any bona fide user.

The Reference Division of the British Library also acquires research materials in microform. During the last five years the two Divisions have worked closely to ensure a minimum of duplication, and each makes its collections available to users of the other.

DAVID N. WOOD,
British Library Lending Division, Boston Spa, Wetherby, West Yorkshire.

There will be a poetry reading in memory of Frances Horowitz, at the Young Vic on Saturday December 3 at 2pm. Among those taking part will be Anne Stevenson, Hugh Plater and Robert Githens.

for 11/10/83

In a booby-trapped universe

Grevel Lindop

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 217pp. Cambridge University Press. £19.50.
 0521236436

Can Cowper's work ever again find more than a narrowly academic readership? Until recently it seemed improbable. Almost from the start, the very nature of Cowper's successes told against him. For fifty years after his death he was hugely popular in Evangelical circles, but this sectarian vogue aroused an antagonism which persisted long after theological fashions had changed and the "religious classes" had forgotten him. *The Task* opened up new poetic territory, only to be elbowed from its own ground by *The Excursion* and *The Prelude*. Cowper's phrases are still embedded in the language, but they are of exactly the kind ("The cup that cheers . . ."); "God moves in a mysterious way . . .") to deter modern readers. "The Castaway" is still anthologized and read, but those who turn to Cowper's works for companion-pieces are unlikely to recognize them where they lurk, disguised as hymns or elegies for cagebirds.

The recent crop of critical books on Cowper, however, suggests that things may be improving, and that there may now be enough academic interest in Cowper to spill over into a more widespread appreciation of his merits. Vincent Newney's book is very much the kind of study needed by readers prepared to take an intelligent interest in Cowper but unsure of where to start. Admittedly, *Cowper's Poetry: A Critical Study and Reassessment* has its drawbacks. It is too long; it begins dully, examining earlier critical views in a chapter the non-specialist would do well to skip; and its critical method is not as sound as it seems. Newney's analysis of the "elegiac solemnity" kept up by the measured pace of the verse and repeated alliteration on 's', 'p' and 'd' sounds. But it tells us what to expect from Cowper, offers close readings of much of his best work and keeps its involvement with biographical matters to a useful minimum.

Accepted discords

Julia Briggs

A. J. SMITH
Literary Love: The role of passion in English poems and plays of the seventeenth century
 184pp. Edward Arnold. £17.50.
 0713163887

A. J. Smith is best known as a critic of Donne's secular verse: his virtues are not elegant and fastidiously precise prose style, a respect for the complexities of his text and a sense of its connection with felt experience—assets that, in some circles, may be considered a trifle demodé. His approach reflects an integrity unresponsive to, or coyly shrinking from the violation or distortion that ideas can impose. So the grand sweep promised by *Literary Love: The role of passion in English poems and plays of the seventeenth century* sounds interestingly uncharacteristic. In the event both title and subtitle are misleading, though blame for this is likely to lie with the publishers—the profession seems currently gripped by the conviction that sales can be boosted by giving books prosily informative titles.

This particular title trembles on the brink of parody: can romance love, the most literary of all human emotions, exist independent of a defining literature? The forms love takes, the conventions it observes, the limitations within which it operates are all culturally determined, the main determinants being writers. There are further problems raised by the subtitle, where "passion" seems to define "love", yet in the seventeenth century it was commonly regarded as the antithesis of love—in fact it is precisely this antithesis that Professor Smith, in his

For Newey, Cowper's "was the first strenuously subjective vision": the first to move decisively from the objective values of pastoralism to an introspective, personal vision that discovered spiritual value and mystery in the secular world of mundane experience. In this uncontroversial view, Cowper is the pre-Romantic, the forerunner of Coleridge and Wordsworth. Certainly it is impossible now to read *The Task* without constant mental reference to Cowper's successors who, as it were, took cuttings from *The Task* to grow into magnificent trees of their own: the prospect over the Ouse enjoyed by Cowper and Mrs Unwin ("dear companion of my walks") in Book I transforming itself into the landscape a few miles above Tintern Abbey, or Coleridge's "Frost at Midnight" looming beyond the "Winter Evening" of Book IV, where in "parlour twilight" the solitary poet watches "The sooty films that play upon the bars of the fire, foreboding . . . some stranger's near approach".

Newey will not, however, allow a merely historical importance to Cowper, whom he presents as a poet of confinement and hopeless flight, exploring the hideous paradoxes of a universe not so much abandoned as boobytrapped by God: the Royal George sunk with all hands in port; Mrs Throckmorton's bullfinch devoured in his neat cage on the study table; Alexander Selkirk, monarch and prisoner of all be surveys in a parodic Eden where even the tameness of the heasts is "shocking".

The culmination of Newey's book is a reading of "The Castaway" and the *Olney Hymns*, which he sees as closely related. He rejects the notion that the *Hymns* show a "progression" towards triumphant faith, and has a sharp eye for the many points at which they disappoint our comfortable expectations. "Can a woman's tender care / Cease towards the child she bare?" asks Cowper's Christ: a merely rhetorical question, we might complacently assume. But "Yes", comes the answer, "she may forgetful be. / Yet will I remember thee . . .". The expected analogy fails, and we are back in the abyss of ungrounded faith. Newey notices the "tinge of exasperation" in "The Contrite Heart".

The Lord will heppiness divine
 On contrite hearts bestow:
 Then tell me, gracious GOD, is mine
 A contrite heart, or no?

—where introspection has bred only blank confusion; and he alerts us to the "coldness" of

"The Christian", an absurdly priggish icon which makes us chiefly aware of the poet's envious sense of exclusion.

Newey's account of "The Castaway" contains no surprises apart from a persuasive suggestion of its debt to Pope's *Odysey*, but as with the rest of Cowper's work Newey's method, one of careful explication that never sinks to mere paraphrase, deepens our sense of the poetic richness, the delicate control of diction engaged with huge emotional tensions, that still makes Cowper's work so rewarding.

The two components implied by Martin Priestman's *Cowper's Task: Structure and Influence* remain, throughout his book, somewhat enigmatic. "Structure" is dealt with in seven chapters which, after examining the difficulties created by *The Task's* "uncertainty of direction, its mixture of evasion and overstatement", offer a book-by-book reading of the poem. Priestman's careful tracing of the poem's twists and turns and inconsistencies does not, however, reveal—or intend to reveal—any "organic" or "unified" structure, but rather tends to confirm exactly what Cowper—with baffling artlessness—tells us in his "Advertisement": that the poem grew associatively by the poet's simply "pursuing the train of thought to which his situation and turn of mind led him". The nature of "influence" is also problematic. Though there is brief examination of Cowper's debts to Virgil and Milton, Prior and Young, Priestman seems mainly preoccupied with Cowper's influence on Wordsworth. His last chapter offers "a detailed comparison of *The Task* and *The Prelude*", and is the longest in the book, though at thirty-six pages it can be no more than a sketch and reads rather like an outline for a different book. Priestman asserts, however, that "a discussion of 'influence' is not finally the main point of such a comparison", though his claims that *The Task* is "an important staging-post on the way to *The Prelude's* own (poetic) synthesis" and that it "bequeaths" to *The Prelude* a "strategy of modulation between the 'familiar style' . . . and a quasi-epic mode" seem at least to tend in that direction, and the reader may well prefer the word "influence", which does after all appear in Priestman's title, to his own formulation, "the debate between the strategies of two poems that repeatedly turn, for whatever reasons, to the same structure".

Unlike Newey, who explicitly rejects post-

structuralist approaches, Priestman draws on recent critical techniques to the extent of treating *The Task* as largely self-referential. The poem certainly invites this: its enigmatic title refers partly to the imposed task of writing the poem, and its preoccupation with walking seems to imply a view of the poem as a journey through a perplexing landscape relieved by fine viewpoints and places of shelter. The disadvantage of systematically pursuing such a reading, however, is that it turns every part of the poem into a little allegory of the whole, to be expounded with tiresome ingenuity. Cowper playfully hints that the carefully nurtured cucumber of Book III, "dressed to the taste / Of critic appetite" corresponds to his poem, and that both are perhaps "the fruit / Of too much labour, worthless when produced". But it seems unhelpful to go much beyond this, asserting, for example, that

The well-prepared soil is the poet's intimacy with such tasks, which have not yet been contaminated by the first half of the poem; the layer of earth covering the manure is the present claim to have changed the subject entirely, or indeed the garden-as-subject; the manure now comes to seem like the poet's "nature" in a spontaneous, uncontrolled, passionate state.

Another curious effect of Priestman's approach is that speculation about the tensions of the poem soon creates an implied author indistinguishable from the historical Cowper: thus we find Cowper putatively identifying with the prisoners in the Bastille, or "presenting himself firmly as the exemplary 'happy man'", or "deliberately trying to flatter the poem out" by creating a "look of amiable muddle" in the middle of Book VI. This looks very much like the old game of guessing at the author's intentions, and indeed the virtues of Priestman's readings are of an amiable, old-fashioned kind: some thoughtful explication of difficult passages, a renewed sense of the poem's liveliness, and the incidental communication of the pleasure the critic has gained from reading it.

Perhaps what is missing from both these books is a sufficient sense of how skillfully Cowper could exploit effects of naivety and deliberate bathos. An understanding of his peculiarly artful awkwardness is essential if he is to escape the readership he deserves: by a characteristic irony, such effects give Cowper's poetry its unique and pungent flavour but, misunderstood, have allowed generations of readers to think of him as a gentlemanly trifler.

Analysis and edification

Robert Morgan

ALAN RICHARDSON and JOHN BOWDEN
 (Editors)
A New Dictionary of Christian Theology
 636pp. SCM. £19.50.
 0354 02308 1
 GORDON S. WAKEFIELD (Editor)
A Dictionary of Christian Spirituality
 400pp. SCM. £15.
 0354 01966 4

The first of these new dictionaries overhauls and supersedes its unsatisfactory predecessor, edited in 1969 by the late Dean Ann Richardson: the second is entirely new. Their appearance alongside those on Christian Ethics (1967) and on Liturgy and Worship (1972) is a major event in English religious publishing.

John Bowden, as revising editor, has ruthlessly weeded out some tendentious articles in the old *Dictionary of Theology*, and with few exceptions retained only those which have stood the test of time. The earlier volume had thirty-six contributors, almost all of them British. Its successor has 175, over a third of whom are Americans, and including a few from elsewhere. The new one drops all biographical entries, perhaps to avoid overlap with the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, and the "glossary of technical terms" element has been reduced. In place of these a much wider range of articles, most new, a few revised and some substantial, may fairly claim to give a compact overview of the state of the subject.

Like other disciplines theology has been subject to massive changes over the past two hundred years. In it, unlike most other disciplines, these have been and still are massively resisted in some quarters. This continuing debate arises out of the peculiar character of a subject in which rational investigation is made of matters which are at least in part admittedly beyond all reason. It is thus scarcely surprising that fundamental questions about how theology should proceed constantly emerge throughout this volume. Revelation has been redefined, as the article on Scripture, doctrine, and the like, and all the old labels classifying the discipline are shown to be in the process of being reassessed.

Sports of the glebe

Gerard Irvine

THOMAS HINDE
A Field Guide to the English Country Parson
 126pp. Phoebe Phillips/Holmann. £8.95.
 064 98212 1

"Give a reasonably educated, middle-class Englishman a modest income, a house in the country and job security for life and see what he will do." So starts Thomas Hinde's engaging book, and goes on:

He will do remarkable things. He becomes a world authority on spiders; he invents a theory of history which makes Dr. Johnson a tribe of Phoenician pre-Christian Crusaders; he plants 5,000 rose bushes in his garden and the surrounding countryside, runs his own household pack, makes his rectory into a monastery, turns a Roman Catholic, collects folk-songs, breeds training race-horses or green milcs, rides from London to John O'Groats. . . . There seems to be no limit to the variety of his interests, or the obsessive way in which he pursues them.

Certainly if the middle-class Englishman is a country parson, he has done all these things and many more so less peculiar. From the 150 entries in Hinde's *Field Guide* we may add: inventing bottled beer; lavatories which flush with dry earth; wool-combing; and reaping and threshing; murdering the mistress of the Earl of Sandwich; and marrying a lesbian couple. And what fate they meet being murdered by the curate with the connivance of his wife! Hinde may note that while the curate was being murdered, the wife, who didn't actually do the murdering, was burnt alive; executed for sorcery; a popular political partisan; imprisoned for political offences (in the 1870s); or killed by a lion in a zoo. The scope and drama of the events from clerical life make the mind

The first indication of change is found in the title. The limitation to a specific religious tradition is characteristic, and is not merely a matter of specialist convenience. Any study of religion or its sub-compartment theology needs to attend to particular cases. "Natural religion" is out, as is its old adversary, revealed religion. One studies an actual tradition or traditions. These are, however, neither monolithic nor hermetically sealed from outside influences. An account of Christian theology today inevitably embraces different denominational traditions. The relationship to other religions and ideologies is equally important but more difficult to handle in a work such as this. Articles on Pluralism, and Christianity and other religions, cannot hope to do more than state the problem, and one may wonder whether the dictionary quite overcomes Western parochialism. Marxism and Materialism get separate articles, as does Marxist theology. Jewish theology does not feature, though some would rate it a closer relation.

The world in which Christian theology is done today is represented here more through the variety of contemporary methods of study than through adjacent subject-matter. The historical study of ideas and institutions has dominated Western Christian theology since the last century and is now expanded by anthropological and sociological methods and insights. Philosophical analysis of doctrine has a much longer pedigree and receives a better treatment in this volume than in its predecessor, thanks to some new philosophical contributions. Problems of religious language rightly emerge in several articles, and are sometimes brilliantly expounded—for example, in the article on Imagery, religious. A more significant development, in contrast with the earlier book, is that the modern scientific study of religion is now seen to be important for Christian theology. The old hostility between theology and religious studies is more or less overcome.

The balance between information and analysis is delicately struck in this dictionary, and the question how much to include from biblical scholarship judiciously answered with a thick spread of theoretical and methodological articles (exegesis, hermeneutics, historical criticism, biblical criticism, allegory and typology) and a few on such broad central themes as Old

Testament theology, New Testament theology, prophecy, law, gospel, righteousness (a Pauline preference). Jesus is the only individual listed—but this article is misnamed since it concerns only modern Jesus-research.

The most striking comment on the internal state of Christian theology made by these two books is the emergence of "spirituality" as a subject worth a separate semi-popular encyclopaedic dictionary. In so far as it is an academic subject (and obviously it is more importantly something else) one would have thought it inseparable from theology; not only overlapping (as some article titles do), but ultimately identical. But there are practical advantages as well as commercial ones in separating them. It allows the new arrival extra space.

Gordon Wakefield, the editor of *A Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, has assembled an interesting and varied team of 153, while still writing fifty-five of the 358 articles himself. Some of the contributors are professional scholars in theology, history and literature, and some of these show that the subject can be treated without the sentimentality which surfaces in some of the others. The dictionary has a heavily historical and biographical bias, and that is what most buyers will want in a work of reference. They will also derive benefit from the wealth of inspiring quotation. It is greatly to the editor's credit that Protestant spirituality is taken seriously, even though, as J. A. Whyte observes (on Scottish spirituality), "Anyone acquainted with the intellectual argumentative character of Scottish Calvinism might wonder if any flower of spirituality could grow on such a rocky soil" (apparently it can).

But the effect of this historical and biographical orientation is to give the subject a tendency towards edification, even when treated academically. Whereas the historical study of biblical and even doctrinal texts has a sharp critical edge, here the individuals chosen are mostly good and worthy people, and even the movements described are suspiciously short on shadow. One reason for this is that one to two-page articles leave little room for critical assessment. But, more importantly, historical study needs to be complemented by other ways of studying this vital dimension of religion. More philosophical and social scientific analysis would allow the suspicion of intellectual softness as well as contributing

greatly to understanding the subject.

In so rich a book almost any criticism might be answered by counter-examples; some of the articles contain good theological argument. But the psychological aspects, including psychological criticism of some spiritual practice, could have been given more attention, and the sociological aspects of spirituality scarcely feature here. Both weaknesses, especially the second, reflect the state of the subject and ought to stimulate further research, eg along the lines of Peter Brown's "holy man" essays.

The comparative aspects are treated through what are inevitably very general articles on non-Christian religions, and the contemporary scene is also acknowledged by articles on black, liberation, feminine, animal and ecumenical spirituality, drugs, the charismatic movement, communes and Rastafarianism, for example. Less fashionable contributors to spirituality today receive less than their due. We are told in an article on sexuality that "monasticism intended to witness to the eschatological dimension of Christianity". Why the past tense? The articles on the historical traditions (including that on monastic spirituality) are generally better than those which claim to interpret the current scene.

The analytic weakness of the *Spirituality* volume is perhaps the price paid for separating the two dictionaries. The dimension neglected there are admirably treated in *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology*. Its excellent articles on religion, Freudian and Jungian psychology, and interiority, for example, have relevance to both sides. The separation is overcome, too, in many of the historical articles in both volumes, especially those on patristic and medieval subjects. These give every indication that the new arrival on (some) theological curricula will train students to see doctrines in their broader religious contexts.

The biblical and hermeneutical articles in both dictionaries are thoughtful if sometimes unnecessarily tentative. It is a pity that some of the least intelligible passages in the theological dictionary occur in articles on ministry and priesthood. Apart from such occasional blemishes this more mature and more encyclopaedic dictionary is a splendid reference work which can expect a long life. Both can be warmly recommended.



eccentrics. Abolition of the lifelong parson's freehold has removed the job security, and the wholesale union of benefices the leisure which has been a condition for the flowering of the richer specimens of the field.

Although it is written in an agreeably cool and throwaway style, Thomas Hinde's book is not just a *few d'espri*. The introduction is a serious and useful pointed history of the development of the country parson. The book is beautifully produced, with charming line illustrations (mostly architectural, such as that of Sydney Smith's rectory at Foston-le-Clay, reproduced above) and ornamental initials to each entry, drawn by Maggie Colwell and Jacques Goyier. It can be read, and reread, with pleasure: a perfect guest's bedroom book, or an admirable, if cautionary, Christmas present to the Vicar.

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Memorials and moralities

D. D. R. Owen

ALAN E. KNIGHT
Aspects of Genre in Late Medieval French Drama
190pp. Manchester University Press. £25.
071900862X

In this venture in literary taxonomy, Alan E. Knight ranges more freely than might be expected from his modest title and restricted period of study (about 1475 to 1560). Preferring to argue from the general to the particular, he moves about his territory twirling wide conceptual nooses to lasso his texts and corral them into their proper generic pens. It is a serious business: "The question of genre is of fundamental importance for understanding all forms of literary and dramatic expression." Unfortunately earlier critics, from Thomas Sebillot in the sixteenth century to the late Jean Frappier, never achieved "a proper conception of the various dramatic genres at all levels". The reason lay largely in their failure to shrug off the Classical notion, revived in the Renaissance, of theatre being either tragic or comic. Since this classification was foreign to the Middle Ages, Knight considers it imperative to "begin with criteria that are compatible with the medieval perception of the world". That makes it easier, for example, to resolve the

particular problems of identification posed by the morality plays.

A first distinction is between "historical" and "fictional" genres, that is between those handling matter that shows the operation of God's providence in the history of the world (mysteries and most saints' plays have this "memorial" function) and those preoccupied with the dilemma of the individual human soul faced by choices affecting its eternal destiny and hence exemplary in effect (farces, *farces* and most moralities). The "historical" works are thus theocentric and their temporal dimension is vital; the fictional plays are essentially homocentric and atemporal. Then a comparison of farce and morality play reveals the crucial difference that whereas the former displays a world dominated by folly, the latter, with its underlying concept of a moral order, implies the ultimate sovereignty of reason. Knight considers the *farce* a sub-genre of the farce. And while he concedes the occasional blurring of these distinctions and the existence of certain hybrids, his confidence in the overall scheme allows him to tabulate his findings in a diagram that satisfies our post-Renaissance craving for neatness and clarity.

That we should approach these plays through the medieval vision of the world and not our own is a laudable principle; and Knight's conception of that vision is backed by

contemporary literary, philosophical and moral writings. So his elegant discussion all but convinces us that medieval drama could not have been other than it is, and that any intelligent man of its age must have regarded its genres in this light. Then we think of the people who composed, performed, and were excited by the works; and doubts creep in. Were the playwrights conscious of conforming to an ideal scheme beyond mere literary tradition? And how far were their audiences conditioned to react in the appropriate way? The fact is that medieval writers were less genre-conscious than we and looser in their use of terms (the advent of printing probably helped, as Knight indeed suggests, to sharpen the focus). We cannot rely on the authors themselves to fix the dividing lines between history and epic, epic and romance, courtly tale or fable and fabliau, or to distinguish between fabliau and comic monologue or dialogue and farce, or to tell us when farce becomes morality. There is a real risk, then, once external theoretical criteria have been established, of their being read back into the texts, whose autonomy is thereby weakened.

As "fictional" genres, the farce and *farce* should, according to Knight, have a didactic function. So, scrutinizing closely the conjugal farce, he ascribes to it the therapeutic value of alleviating group tensions and, by reinforcing social norms, of acting as a conservative force

amid social upheaval. This seems a pretentious claim for plays that rarely seem more than light-hearted romps (the hint at a moral at the end of *Le Cuvier* could be parodic). In any case, their plots are often age-old and still comically potent today, so any lessons to be learnt should be universal.

Knight examines the medieval foodness for spectacle and dramatic activity set within a ceremonial, processional structure, as in the extended tournament. This he sees as "a single processional spectacle with added nodes of activity" (a priority bruised combatoat might have questioned). Similarly the plays, themselves often linear in structure, "formed nodes of more intense dramatic activity in the processional observance of holidays and important events". The are thus reduced to elements in "a single generic entity", the scheme again taking precedence over the text as autonomous creation.

"I do not claim", says Knight, "to have provided the final answer to the question of genres in late medieval French drama." One must agree. But the pursuit has been full of interest, in its main directions as well as its detours, like comments on printing practices, wedding festivities and carnivals, tournaments, royal entries with their *mystères* *mimes* and *tableaux vivants* and much more beside. This is a book to be pondered: a book of wide vistas and one that should not gather dust.

quotidian culture of personal display, lyrics and hunting-parties, we need not be pessimistic in our conclusions about English court culture in the later Middle Ages.

One of the symposium's avowed aims was to correct the identification of these courts with those late medieval achievements which we now value. It succeeds admirably in this, but also provides the evidence for judging the relationship of court and culture more realistically. For example, several essays justify the conclusion that the court was unaware it was fostering stylistic originality, and that the works it promoted did not show a distinctively courtly sensibility. We may now ask whether such qualities are the most suitable points of reference for mapping late medieval culture. In addition, the court which appears in these pages is an interesting place, even though it lacks the heady atmosphere it was once thought to have. It is rather old-fashioned, redolent of early medieval pleasures and ideals. It is conservative in its literary taste, preferring the French romances to contemporary fiction. It maintains the crusading principles, applying them in the physically uncomfortable, financially unrewarding, but honorific context of Prussia. On the other hand, despite its apparent commitment to the feminine in the courts of love, it has made these

very institutions predominantly masculine. However, it gives a wide and, to a large extent, sexually undifferentiated education to its children. Above all, it is dominated by French and Latin at the very time it is fighting the Hundred Years War and adopting St George as a national saint.

With the cycle-drama records now providing new insights into the urban culture of the period, it is timely that this volume should re-examine the "high" culture of the court so critically. Particularly noticeable is the evidence adduced in discussing the court directly one to a consideration of the provinces. Several essays (especially A. I. Doyle's) make this connection between court and country. In correcting interpretations which concentrate on the court as the fount of culture, this collection implicitly invites us to examine the channels along which culture flows between areas separated by geography and sensibility – indeed, my main criticism is that it has not, as a whole, made this point sufficiently explicit. It provides more scope for cultural re-analysis than the individual contributors, with their differing critical and descriptive goals can show consciousness of; in this respect *English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages* is more than a collection of essays but less than a book.

The history of struggle

Peter Carey

MICHAEL LEIFER
Indonesia's Foreign Policy
198pp. George Allen and Unwin. £15.
014 327069 7

We were born in fire. We were not born in the rays of the full moon like other nations. There are other nations whose independence was presented to them. There are other nations, who, without any effort on their part, were given independence by the imperialists as a present. Not us, we fought for our independence at the cost of sacrifice. We gained our independence through a tremendous struggle which has no comparison in this world.

The late President Sukarno's words in a radio address to his people at the start of his ill-fated "Confrontation" with the shortly to be formed Federation of Malaysia in December 1962 epitomize one of the main themes in Indonesia's foreign policy since independence in 1945: a sense of abiding pride in the nation's revolutionary achievement (an achievement which has many interesting parallels with that of Vietnam). This, combined with a consciousness of the country's vast territorial scale, its immense population, bountiful resources and strategic location have all imbued Indonesian leaders with the firm conviction that the archipelago is entitled to play a leading role in the management of regional order in Southeast Asia. At the same time, the country's far-flung boundaries, economic weakness vis-à-vis other powers, great ethnographic diversity and problems of internal dissent (both communist and Muslim inspired), have made them acutely aware of its potential vulnerability.

For the most part, therefore, they have acted with caution, suspicious of the blandishments

of the super-powers and anxious (since 1967) to steer their fellow ASEAN members in the direction of a regional association which would exclude outside influences as much as possible. It is this interesting combination of confidence and vulnerability which Michael Leifer takes as his main theme in this wide-ranging and sensibly argued analysis of Indonesia's foreign policy from the declaration of independence in August 1945 up to the early years of the present decade. In the space of a mere 182 pages, he charts the main events which have shaped the country's international relations beginning with the bitter five-year struggle against the Dutch (1945-49), which educated Indonesian leaders to the realities of global power politics, through the years of parliamentary liberalism (1950-57) and Sukarno's "Guided Democracy" (1957-65), to the more sober and pragmatic style of President Suharto's "New Order" (1967 to the present).

Leifer is particularly informative on the way in which foreign policy goals – eg, the campaign for the recovery of Western New Guinea (Irian Barat) and the confrontation with Malaysia – were influenced by domestic developments, and he is eminently fair towards Sukarno, whom he recognizes to have been nearly a decade ahead of his time in his concept of "New Emerging Forces" in world politics. In his discussion of events since the murderous suppression of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) in 1965-66, Leifer is very much on his own ground, handling Indonesia's crucial relationship with ASEAN, its attitudes towards China and the Indonesian states, its tragic invasion of East Timor (December 1975), and its successful campaign for the adoption of the archipelagic principle at the Third UN Law of the Sea Conference, with a sure touch.

Although this is not, by any means, the first book to provide a systematic and comprehensive account of Indonesia's foreign policy since independence, as is claimed on the dust-jacket (the studies by Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung, David Mazingo and Franklin B. Weinstein are, in many respects, much fuller and more detailed), it does fulfil a useful purpose in bringing together the main foreign policy issues over a thirty-seven-year period.

Inevitably, in a book as succinct as this which is based almost exclusively on secondary sources, there are bound to be a few omissions and oversights. Some of these are quite minor: namely, the failure to refer to Mohammed Hatta's political autobiography when dealing with his "independent and active" line on Indonesia's foreign policy in 1948 (it seems that this long antedated his September 1948 speech) and the lack of reference to the close links between Suharto and Japanese business interests before his achievement of presidential office in 1967. Others are more serious. There is no proper discussion, for example, of the politics of oil in Indonesia (amazingly the acronym OPEC does not appear in the index), and consequently Indonesia's relations with Middle Eastern countries and the role of the national oil company, PERTAMINA (virtually a state within a state in the early 1970s), are hardly mentioned. At the same time, the repercussions of the Iranian Revolution in Indonesia and the way it has shaped government attitudes towards its own Muslim critics within the country are not considered.

Another important omission is Leifer's failure to explore in sufficient detail the American influences on the "mind" of the Indonesian military planners (especially their attitudes towards the communist world) in the New Order

period. Rudolf Mrazek's seminal thesis on the United States and the Indonesian military, published in Prague in 1978, which is not referred to by Leifer, would have been useful here and would have clarified the far-reaching impact of such institutions as the US Staff and Command School at Fort Leavenworth (Kansas) and the US Infantry Training School at Fort Benning (Georgia) where several Indonesian officers, now holding senior political positions in the New Order government, studied in the 1950s. The former school was also influential in shaping the political studies curricula of the Indonesian Army's own Staff College (SESKOAD) at Bandung where some crucial policy seminars were held in the mid-1960s.

Finally, the book's style and presentation could have been improved. The claim on the dust jacket that the arguments are presented in a "clear and incisive manner, free of political science jargon" is not borne out by a close reading of the text. In places, the writing is frankly clumsy. The misuse of the verb "perceived" occurs three times, and statements are often needlessly repeated: we are told no less than four times that during the Guided Democracy period Sukarno lacked an institutional power base, and three times in the space of two pages that the end of the confrontation with Malaysia was delayed because it served an important domestic political function during the internal transfer of power in 1966-67. The choice of spelling between Old Style and New Style Indonesian is not consistently maintained: for example, in the case of Ir. Djuanda Kartawidjaya's name which incongruously combines elements of both systems. The index is not comprehensive and no bibliography is given. For a slim book priced like an expensive monograph one expects more than this.

Conservative consumers

John J. McGavin

V. J. SCATTERGOOD and J. W. SHERBORNE
(Editors)
English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages
220pp. Duckworth. £18.
0715616374

More than many such collections, this volume has a degree of unity, and the editors have intelligently recognized its primary value – as a work for scholarly reference – by providing indexes of manuscripts, names and subjects, and by permuting some cross-reference between the papers. Nevertheless, it concluding essay would have been of benefit.

Inevitably, scholars of the quality of those represented here question the evidence exactly. It is either lost, or still to be discovered, or, if extant, suffers from a lack of contrastive evidence or because its "factual" nature obstructs our view of contemporary attitudes. What, for example, does possession of a book imply when that owner inherited it and gave it away? These apparently negative concerns are precisely what make scholarship valuable for others in the field, and what makes this volume often difficult, but necessary, reading.

The collection also faces up to the complex range of meaning that the term "culture" can have: from particular artistic achievements to the general character of thought or prevalent attitudes. Some contributors (eg, J. W. Sherborne, V. J. Scattergood and H. M. Colvin) are strict in their analysis of the court's contribution to the former; others (eg, Maurice Keen, Nicholas and Nigel Willmott) achieve a more positive effect by discussing the latter. Both approaches are helpful and neither is adopted to the exclusion of the other, though the ordering of the papers as published could have brought out the contrast more.

When is the court not the court? The more one identifies it with the monarch, the less optimistically one can talk of a specifically courtly contribution to the national artistic heritage. The more one considers courtiers as men outside the *famille regis* (all members of the court of parliament), for instance, the more "artistic" displaces "courtly" as a useful description. English kings do not emerge as promoters of a distinctive style in any of the areas discussed here. They appear to have loved books less than they banded them, and even Henry VI, as J. J. G. Alexander points out, does not match a Continental ruler, like Charles V in love of learning. The practical guidance of the *Secreta Secretorum* was appreciated by kings and their courtiers, for

more than the literature of Chaucer and Gower. (It is interesting also to see the "educated merchant" class disappear as an audience for contemporary vernacular works.)

The difficulty in judging the private attitudes of kings reveals itself in the contrasting references which two contributors make to the same event: Froissart's presentation of a book of love poems to Richard II. Wilkins writes: "In England Richard II is known to have been devoted to poetry and music; we recall his enthusiastic reception of Froissart's book of love poems." Sherborne, on the other hand, writes: "We must accept on trust his [Froissart's] report that Richard was delighted with a collection of poems about love stories." The trouble is that when the Princess of Wales radiantly accepts your bouquet this does not necessarily mean that she will rush home later to smell it; nor does it mean, of course, that she is humoring you, and dislikes flowers.

Although the English kings treated here gain books from other countries (particularly France) by gift, marriage, or the fortunes of war, rather than by asking for them, and seem to be "consumers" of art, employing craftsmen whose skills and styles are provincial rather than inspired by the court, and although they can lack artistic discernment, and enjoy the

Scallop-shell tourists

R. A. Fletcher

HORTON and MARIE-HELENE DAVIES
Holy Days and Holidays: The Medieval Pilgrimage to Compostela
255pp. Associated University Presses. £20.
08387 50184

Medieval pilgrims to Compostela, "might indeed resemble the cursed caravans of modern tourists that pour upon the Greek Parthenon, speaking loudly in the restaurants of the Acropolis, and dumping their bottles of Coke or of retzina in the surrounding streets". The tone of Horton and Marie-Hélène Davies' book is summed up in this quotation. They are high-minded, warm-hearted, generous and sometimes rather muddled. One cannot imagine them conversing in a restaurant in anything above a discreet mutter. In their book they take us through the motivations of pilgrims and their preparations for pilgrimage, along the routes that led to Compostela, with detours to reflect on relics, Romanesque sculpture, spirituality, the hazards of pilgrimage and its delights. The authors are at once alert, enthusiastic and scholarly, and their book is an admirable introduction to its subject.

But although their research has been diligent it has not been quite diligent enough. There are slips here and there, and some unawareness of important recent work. For example, Alfonso VI did not send to the monks of Cluny "the proceeds of an annual tax – a single munificent donation of ten thousand talents" (p. 24): from 1077 he undertook to pay 2,000 gold pieces every year, and the money was derived not from taxation of his own kingdom but from tributes paid by the Moslem princes of southern Spain. The rite for blessing pilgrims does not occur in the earliest recensions of the Mainz Pontifical (which presumably lurks behind the pontifical "of Germanic origin" (sic) on p. 78), but was an addition of the late eleventh century. Or again, if the authors had been aware of Christopher Hohler's work they might have been more cautious in the use they made of the so-called *Codex Calixtinus*. They also sometimes ramble from the point. Seven seems redundant, especially in view of the authors' own admission that there was so little of it in Spain. Similarly, their meditation on the applicability of the Psalms to the pilgrim's lot wills perceptive and even moving, would have gained in effect if they could have

shown that pilgrims actually read the Psalms – but they can't. The question also involves them in a mess over literacy.

Books on medieval pilgrimages to Compostela – quite a well-established literary genre by now – usually suffer from being padded out in this way, simply because the topic is a surprisingly fugitive one. There is very little reliable evidence on all sorts of crucial questions. All the more reason for squeezing absolutely dry such evidence as we do possess. More might have been said here about the origins and growth of the cult of St James in Spain, much more about the social changes of the tenth and eleventh centuries, and the ecclesiastical responses to them, which seem to have triggered off the extraordinary popularity of pilgrimages during the central Middle Ages. The expected, during the central Middle Ages, as the life of pilgrimage was "liminal", as anthropologists tell us in their ghastly jargon, and the pilgrim was divorced from ritual and custom as well as by distance from kin and community and routine; but if we are to understand him we have to put him back where he came from. It is pleasant to be led along the road to Compostela by such kindly and well-mannered guides as Mr and Mrs Davies; so long as we do not forget that the road is only a part of pilgrimage, and that the pilgrim's lot wills perceptive and even moving, would have gained in effect if they could have

James Cable

J. S. EDWARDS
Prime Ministers and Diplomats: The Making of Australian Foreign Policy 1901-1949
260pp. Oxford University Press. £20.
019 53380 0

Prime Ministers and Diplomats is not a history of Australian foreign policy but of the men and the administrative apparatus that, for the first fifty years of its existence, helped to shape it. The changing international situation, Australian aspirations and their outcome, the actual issues discussed with other governments, the conduct of negotiations: all these receive only brief allusion as the bare minimum of background to a narrowly focused ray of enquiry. Who took decisions and with what kind of advice or assistance?

So specialized a book is exceptionally hard to write, for interest must be maintained in a theme arbitrarily deprived of its orchestration. There is much drama, for instance, in the events that punctuated the evolution of Australian attitudes to the outside world: the Anglo-Japanese alliance, Gallipoli, the Washington treaties, Chanak, the Singapore base, the collapse of British power that ex-

posed Australia to Japanese attack. The Australian impact on the outside world was often remarkable, but this international drama is eschewed here. So is the story of those fierce domestic acids that helped to dissolve Australian ardour for imperial solidarity. This is administrative history.

As such, it deserves praise. The style is easy, the biographical and anecdotal material well placed, the unfolding of the theme clearly traced through thickets of detail. At the end of it all P.G. Edwards's message is plain. Australian interest in foreign policy developed late and intermittently. In the first half of this century it was exceptionally dependent on the idiosyncrasies of a few leading figures, unusually deprived of organized administrative support. So was the conduct of Australian diplomacy.

To readers in the northern hemisphere perhaps the most interesting section of the book is that dealing with the period from 1941 to 1949. This was the era dominated by the erratic brilliance of Dr Evatt, as Minister for External Affairs, and the no less remarkable personality of his *eminence grise*, the youthful Dr Burton. It was then that the scope of Australian foreign policy, no less than the size of its administrative apparatus, expanded at hectic pace and in a Byzantine hothouse of personal

rivalry and intrigue. As the author says, "the Evatt régime may fairly be seen as a testing furnace for the infant department". His restrained and sober account explains much that puzzled those who encountered Australian diplomats in the late 1940s, even in the following two decades.

To the specialist in Australian history the entire book will be thoroughly useful. Dr Edwards handles his restricted theme with scholarship and skill. If his approach is deliberately dry, it is seldom arid. But a few changes would have enabled this book to attract a wider audience. Students of international relations everywhere are interested in the administrative aspects of national foreign policies, but also want to know whether the particular administrative apparatus was an appropriate response to the conflicting pressures of the national society and of the international environment; and how, and why, this response differed from that chosen by other nations.

On the first count, Edwards has simply underestimated outside ignorance of Australian affairs. Even his best chapter, on the Evatt era, does not specify the contemporary objectives of Australian foreign policy or the degree of success which attended them. His account of domestic constraints is confined to analysis of the relations between Evatt and the prime

ministers who tried to control him. As chief or subordinate, Evatt was clearly a most difficult man, but did he achieve what he intended or what others were able to demand?

The second question is irresistible. Why were politically conscious Australians so reluctant to see their country engage in diplomacy, an activity regarded by most new nations, whether they emerged after the First or Second World War, as an indispensably distinguishing mark of nationhood? Edwards confines his comparisons to Canada, South Africa and the Irish Free State, where "there was a substantial degree of consensus on the desirability of Dominion autonomy in foreign affairs". But what about Finland after December 1917 or Indonesia well before December 1949? Why was the impatient aspiration of most of the world grudgingly and belatedly accepted in Australia as a necessary evil? This is surely a more important question than the rivalries of prime ministers, foreign ministers and bureaucrats, but P.G. Edwards offers no adequate answer.

It was evidently never his intention to do so, but the reader defined in the blurb as "anyone interested in Australian politics and diplomacy" – will expect more from this promising writer's next book.

Suffering beyond words

Hugh Toye

ROBERT HARDIE
The Burma-Siam Railway: The secret diary of Dr Robert Hardie 1942-45
160pp. with colour and black-and-white illustrations. Imperial War Museum. £9.95.
0191 62126 7

For the Australian, Dutch, British or American prisoner of war compelled by the Japanese to work on the Burma-Siam railway, life was found to be easy to write or even to talk. The diary of their experiences. From the diary of Robert Hardie kept – and kept hidden – by the British in Siam in August 1942 until three years later it is easy to see why they would willingly have relived the night-

mare which had lain across their lives; it was enough that their fellow-prisoners understood. But in any case the language was lacking. Those dreadful years had so little in common with normality that there were no terms of comparison – just as they were absent after the First World War for conditions in the trenches. We should be the more grateful for Dr Hardie's diary. Noted down scrupulously, objectively, from day to day, as bad conditions got worse, as sickness, starvation, cruelty passed successive boundaries of belief, events and circumstances became intelligible. This is an important document on whose publication the Imperial War Museum is to be congratulated. Like most of the civilians in Malaya who were captured while serving in the Federated Malay States and Straits Settlements Volunteer Force, Hardie brought with him

ence of tropical conditions and diseases which was to be particularly valuable. The doctors constantly struggled with the Japanese to obtain drugs and supplies beyond the pitiful supply deemed sufficient for slaves, and fought unending battles over the sick, who were marched off in supplementary labour gangs when they could hardly stand – and bled or abandoned if they fell. "It is an undidying sight to see Nobusawa or Eda going rapidly through these queues of ill-looking emaciated men, marking for discharge people whose condition in a civilised country would be marked for urgent admission to a hospital." The Japanese did not believe in sickness for serfs, but reacted like maniacs when threatened by disease themselves. The writer passes lightly over most of the brutality for fear of the consequences if the diary were found, but the index shows that of

the twenty-five Japanese named in the text, nine were later sentenced for war crimes, five of them to death.

Yet, when compared with the situation of the forced labourers from Malaya, of whom some 90,000 are said to have died on the railway and who were treated with animal savagery by the Japanese guards, "one can only feel that we POWs, in spite of all the death and disabilities which result, are being treated with comparative consideration". There were indeed moments of relief; the diary is illustrated by the author's sketches: Christmas could still be celebrated, the beauty of the countryside, ewo fish in the river, were not always ignored, above all there was courage. If justice can be done to the 16,000 who died and to the 45,000 who survived, it has been done here.

A whiter shade of pale

Malu Halasa

MIKE READ
The Story of the Shadows
 246pp. Elm Tree Books. £9.95 (paperback, £6.95).
 0241 108616

The Shadows was the first English beat group: centred on that symbol of teenage rebellion, the electric guitar, the four boys from similar sutured post-war backgrounds were indirectly responsible for countless real and imaginary musical careers as well as the huge popularity of the Fender guitar. But the group, with its stylish cross-over suits, bow-ties and matching suits, presented a much more memorable image than its individual members. Coming of age in an era when pop music, despite the outrage it caused, was pretty wholesome stuff, and the ambition of most teenage idols was to become "all-round entertainers", Hank Marvin, Bruce Welch, Jet Harris and Tony Meehan were the ultimate boys next door – so familiar you could hardly distinguish one from another. Pop stars' lives were not then subject to close scrutiny. All-round entertainers simply did not have embarrassing skeletons in their closets and it was left to the bat-strumming hordes who followed to really justify adult indignation. Mike Read, Radio One disc-jockey and "personality", has compiled and written an autobiography for The Shadows with that age of innocence in mind.

Instead of turning the identical suits into

people he renders the four musicians as anonymous stereotypes. The Shadows' story begins in the 2 is coffee Bar in Soho at the end of the skiffle years, and Read's early chapters on life and atmosphere at the 2 is are his best, primarily because the schoolboy humour, which runs throughout *The Story of the Shadows* and provides most of the picture-captions, seems more at home in the mouths of excited adolescents than in the mouths of hardened professional musicians.

The narrative progresses through innumerable tours and anecdotes from the sunny locations of Cliff Richard films like *Summer Holiday* and *Wonderful Life*. It is recounted in the Shadows' "own words", though it is often difficult to determine whose words, as Read's method of attributing quotes is merely to mention a name somewhere in a preceding paragraph. Despite his determination to make The Shadows appear as innocuous as Marvin's horn-rims, certain human failings occasionally surface. But the disagreements that occurred between band members during their most successful period, 1961-65, which led to Meehan and Harris's departure from the group, and Welch's ill-fated romance with Olivia Newton-John, and his subsequent suicide, are treated with the same "hits-just-keep-on-coming" levity as an appearance on *Ready Steady Go*. As in the case of the mysterious death of third replacement bassist John Rostill, circumstances tend to be described but not explained. And so The Shadows' strength continues to lie in their music: "Apache" and "FBI" remain their best, self-penned, testimonial.

Lost highways

Simon Frith

IAN WATSON
Song and Democratic Culture in Britain: An approach to popular culture in social history
 246pp. Duckworth. £14.95.
 07099 22703

One of my more vivid musical memories is of a Chile Solidarity "International social" in the mid-1970s. A bar but no band, a dance-floor but no disco, people chatting tentatively until it became clear that the night's music was going to be home-made. The MC moved from table to table, inviting people to sing something from "your culture", and as the Chileans and the Italians, the Scots and the Irish duly and cheerfully drew on their folk memories (and suddenly pulled guitars from behind their seats), my English group began to panic. What would we sing? Dimly remembered school hymns? The national anthem? We were the rock generation ("All I can play," someone muttered, "is a gramophone."), and somehow an *acappella* chorus of "Satisfaction" seemed inappropriate. In the end, we sang nothing at all.

That evening would have confirmed Ian Watson's worst fears about the effects of pop culture. His book is a passionate, lucid restatement of the old left-wing argument that folk-song is the socialist sound, that pop music corrupts. This contention has been complicated in the past twenty years – by rock's oppositional claims (from protest to punk), by the commercial logic of the folk "revival" – but Watson has no doubts that it remains essentially correct. He claims, first, that folk music is a proletarian form and therefore, by definition, "progressive", and second, that folk's particular use of voice and text, its organization of tune and audience, also makes it the most politically effective music. In the work of education, telling it like it is: Watson's aim is to develop what he calls Britain's "second culture", the progressive, democratic or proto-socialist elements in the mainstream dominant culture. He believes that "the folk culture, which represents the clearest successor to cultural forms widespread among the working people before the predominance of commercialised mass culture, must be a central component of the second culture."

Popular Song and Democratic Culture in Britain has a double purpose – to persuade trade union and other working-class concerns that one of their activities should be the sup-

port of a "progressive song movement", and to persuade musicians and other cultural activists that in order to be "progressive" they must draw from and develop the traditional folk form. Watson is a literary critic and he pays little attention to the recent attempts of folk historians like Vic Gammage, Dave Harker and Alan Hawkins to document empirically how music worked in the making of the English working class, and to distinguish this from the subsequent creation of folk "traditions". Watson establishes the "subtlety" of folk songs (past and present) differently, with a combination of Leavisite and Leninist criteria – in terms of their truth to life, and their "correct" social analysis. His readings of particular songs are intelligent and interesting, but they take too much for granted about folk's audience (or potential audience) to be convincing.

The question that nags at Watson, of course, is why the working classes themselves are so uninterested in "their" music. Why is pop so popular? His reply is straightforward: the folk tradition, he suggests, was "swamped by an alien, hostile culture", the culture of commercial entertainment, the mass media, the leisure commodity, the US. It may be true (though I doubt it) that if workers had proper opportunities to hear traditionally democratic songs they would recognize themselves to them and thus reject contemporary radio pop. But what is striking about Watson's argument, even in its own terms, is its musicalological nationalism (indeed, the words "swamped by an alien culture" have a familiar ring). The emergence of mass pop music has involved not just the calculations of a music industry, but also the extraordinary impact on our lives of a particular musical language – Afro-American sounds and rhythms now determine the way popular music works both emotionally and socially, and even if we heard them all the time folk-songs would still sound quaint and old-fashioned.

My own conclusion from this is not that of Watson. I'm quite willing to be persuaded that contemporary folk-singers (the astutely entertaining Leon Rosselson, for example, or Watson's examples, Ewan MacColl and Jim Brown) perform in the way that best engages and inspires political movements (CND uses song and singers in this way) but only those of a particular traditional sort. After a hundred and fifty years of industrial capitalism, it seems clear that contamination is as much a political matter as production, desire as much an area of dispute as need; these are the issues that pop activists address and that folk idealists like Watson evade.

Help from your friends

John Stokes

PETER BROWN and STEVEN GAINES
The Love You Make: An Insider's story of The Beatles
 401pp. Macmillan. £8.95.
 0333 361342

Peter Brown worked for Brian Epstein in Liverpool and stayed with the various Bente businesses until 1970, when he joined the Robert Stigwood Company. He was a friend of the Beatles for twenty years. Steven Gaines is a New York journalist. Oddly enough, in *The Love You Make* it is the friend, not the writer, who is the ghost, since Brown's presence is withheld until the unheralded appearance of the first-person pronoun fifty pages into the book. The "I" then fades, only to re-emerge at the start of each chapter before disappearing once again behind the impersonal expertise of the investigative reporter. Although the three surviving Beatles, their wives, ex-wives and relatives, initially encouraged this project and gave long interviews, they are said to be upset by the result. Why, one wonders yet again, won't they learn?

Perhaps one reason for the Beatles' enduring trust is that in the early days their relationship with the media was reciprocal. "A journalist's joy equals a Beatle; a journalist's delirious joy equals four Beatles." That's Mureen Cleave, reporting back to the *Evening Standard* from the first American tour in 1964. When the group played Washington, she wrote: "We of the British contingent, who have been trailing them for days, felt really proud." But on the return to London airport, it was the Beatles who paused, "to clap and cheer the gentlemen of the press."

Another journalist friend was Hunter Davies, whose workmanlike "official biography" was published in 1968. Lennon later called it a whitewash, and a new introduction to the 1978 edition has Davies admitting to pressure from the men at The Beatles' Apple Corporation to "clean up the book, cut out the bad language, stories about John bleating, reference to drugs and suchlike". A footnote in *The Love You Make* further asserts that according to Davies his book "want through wholesale censorship, with the Beatles tearing out pages they didn't like". This secondary revelation is convenient because what is offered here is not so much a new explanation of the Beatles' story as the bits – mainly to do with sex, drugs and money – that Davies's book (and, to a lesser

extent, Philip Norman's *Shout!*, reviewed in the TLS, May 15, 1981) were obliged to avoid. Although Davies apparently thought he'd "made it fairly implicit", Brian Epstein's homosexuality is now documented with the unflinching courage of the truth-teller. John Lennon, we learn, once went to bed with Epstein, and later suggested, in a friendly sort of way, that his manager's autobiography be entitled "A Cellful of Boys". In his public heyday, Epstein was private victim to the machinations of a young gigolo, here named, who persecuted him almost to the end. Not that homosexuality has the monopoly on profitable relationships. Because it opens with Cynthia Lennon's discovery of John's affair with Yoko Ono, it seems at first as if *The Love You Make* is going to be Cynthia's book. It is not more likely, her candour suggested a structural ploy that would help to keep her former husband in the foreground. When the marriage broke up, one of John's cronies agreed to testify to her adultery with him – on John's behalf. Escape from the mutuality of such friendships may be counted among Cynthia's few lucky breaks.

Then there are the drugs. While the Beatles themselves drew public attention to their consumption of LSD, Lennon's use of heroin was kept quiet. Brown and Gaines give various estimates of his dependency though references to "marijuana addicts" do little to justify their interest in what can only have been a miserably private experience. When it comes to the money, Brown's insider's knowledge and Gaines's professional skill combine to more advantage. Read several times over, with undeviating concentration, it is just about possible to follow the accounts of the battles between John, George Harrison, Ringo Starr and Allen Klein on the one hand, and Paul McCartney and his in-laws the Eastmans on the other. On the evidence here presented, it would seem that of the four Beatles, McCartney was the best advised and the worst behaved. Even so, it would be foolish to place too much trust in a narrative that finds the greatest drama in treachery.

When Lennon was murdered, in 1980, Mureen Cleave wrote a moving but detached obituary, in which she remarked: "To be famous for almost anything but pop singing would have suited him better because... he would have met more interesting people." True friends are troubled by the truth, and large portions of *The Love You Make* have been gleaned from uninteresting people eager to gain a little attention by setting the record depressingly straight.

Don't blame the youth

Craig Brown

RAY CONNOLLY
Stardust Memories: Talking about my Generation
 240pp. Michael Joseph. £7.95.
 0907516300

In his introduction to this selection of his interviews from the 1960s, Ray Connolly draws attention to what he describes as "a summit conference of consummate silliness even by sixties standards". In 1967, when Mick Jagger was released from prison on a drug offence, he was flown to a secret meeting place in the countryside where Malcolm Muggeridge, the editor of *The Times* and the Bishop of Woolwich interviewed him for a Granada Television programme. "Today it is inconceivable that the attitudes and catchpenny beliefs of a pop singer would be of interest to anyone other than his most demented fans," Connolly concludes.

Connolly was far more wide-eyed in the 1960s than he appears to be now. He has wisely chosen to publish his pieces as they first appeared, adding only very brief postscripts detailing the subsequent careers of his subjects. He manages to catch not only the jargon of the period – groovy, square, birds, dig, fantastic, and so on – but also the attitudes and affectations. Visiting Jimi Hendrix in a Marble Arch flat in 1967, he notices an Oriental jar full of dead flowers on the bedside. "Idiot dead flowers," explains Jimi. "You can learn from dead things, you know. In my music. Yes."

learned from everything, mainly from my life." Yoko Ono, excusing the photograph of John Lennon and herself naked which appeared on their *Two Virgins* album, says "Basically we're very shy and square people. We'd be the first to be embarrassed if anyone was to invite us to a nude party". She then goes on to describe one of her artistic enterprises: "Another buzz I got was when we boiled a still of water and listened until it evaporated. One of the men there got so turned on by it that he filmed the whole event but he found out later he'd forgotten to put any film in his camera."

Though Connolly is usually self-effacing to the point of invisibility, he occasionally attempts a chummy stab at New Journalism. "And here I am now, sitting with this super-hero" (on Muhammad Ali) or a lounge-lizard critique: "You have to give her marks for persistence" (on Twiggy), with embarrassing results. But he is excellent at recording dialogue and remembering vital, and instantly forgotten, trivia: Jana Seymour's real name is Joyce Frankenburg; the working title for *The Female Eunuch* was "The Clitoris Strikes Back". Charlie Watts used to live in a thirteenth-century hunting lodge, previously owned by Archbishops of Canterbury, the rock singer Chris Farlowe, now an avid collector of Nazi memorabilia, is the nephew of Len Deighton, whom he has never met. Now that the word "Youth" is seldom used, except in conjunction with this word "Unemployment", it is refreshing to be bounced back to the era when the mere mention sent bishops, editors and intellectuals into quivering sanctification.

The parliament of mind

Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini

JERRY FODOR
The Modularity of Mind
 An Essay in Faculty Psychology
 185pp. MIT Press. £15.75.
 0262 063841

Jerry Fodor is probably the leading philosopher of psychology of our time; he is also an *enfant terrible* and, at times, an embarrassment to his profession. He is one of those unimpeachable thinkers who gleefully proceed to blow wide open the "big" questions which, one may suppose, generated their discipline in the first place. In recent years the philosophy of mind and language, notably as practised at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology under the aegis of Fodor and Chomsky, has been setting off quite a few such explosions.

The "MIT look" began by relinquishing the traditional psycholinguistic concern with his social and comparative linguistics in favour of an exhaustive search for a universal grammar, in-built language acquisition devices, "mental organs" and processes of maturation. The role of learning in the linguistic and conceptual development of the child, it was claimed, was largely selective, rather than instructive. Experience – that is, explicit and implicit teaching, as well as the influence of the cultural milieu – was seen to function only as a set of peripheral constraints on the various language acquisition devices. Further to complicate matters, even the term language in its everyday context has become suspect; for Chomsky, in fact, such allegedly basic notion turns out to be quite unilluminating, since it covers an ensemble of arbitrary ss, say, the set of all rhyming pairs of words. As a result, the focus of psycholinguistics has shifted to the speaker's knowledge of a grammar, with its attendant rules of production and interpretation.

Instead of studying such "externalized objects" as language behaviour or the frequency of occurrence of particular words, Fodor and Chomsky have investigated the nature of "internal" representations and mental states and the rules of computation and transformation that appear to govern them. The mind is now represented by them as a collection of "mental organs" or modules, a rather unruly parliament of information processors, each with its own specific set of norms and principles. Unlike Chomsky, perhaps, Fodor is willing to admit that there are also non-modular components of the mind. He is surely not willing to claim that these can be a proper object of scientific psychology. Moreover, the greater our understanding becomes of the abstract principles governing each device or "module", the less these principles seem to apply across modules. What we end up with is a "vertical" psychology, reminiscent of the old philosophy of Franz Joseph Gall, a man who Fodor maintains "opposed to have had an unfairly rotten press". Significantly, the Oxford neurophysiologist John Marshall has coined the term "new organology" to sum up the underlying concept of the "MIT look".

While much may be gained by viewing the mind as an assemblage of modules, much also is lost. There are many who regret that in the losses are the current concerns of "folk psychology", with all its fascination with creativity, metaphors and analogical reasoning. This is a man might well consider that the "folk psychology" involves nothing less than the demise of psychology as he knows it. Strangely enough, Fodor comes very close to endorsing the same conclusion. For him, however, a conclusion is the product of years of dogmatic inquiry and exacting argument. Yet, despite his acknowledged grasp of the "gloom" inherent in his position, Fodor doesn't back

already in 1975, in his momentous essay *The Language of Thought*, which is considered in some quarters to mark a great divide in the twentieth-century philosophy of mind, Fodor advocated a mentalist, computational, linguist and "verbal faculty"-oriented psychology. In the wake of three centuries of philosophical speculation and against the received views of such "dogmatic" doctrines as Gilbert Ryle's "philosophical behaviourism", Fodor maintained that reductionist, non-constructivist psychology in the wake of Hilary Putnam's func-

tionalist theory of the mind, he drew a crucial distinction between "token" reductionism and "type" reductionism; while the former, though not mandatory, was at least permissible, the latter was totally unwarranted and even obscene. The position of a "token" physicalist might be roughly summarized thus: there can be no real difference between mental states or processes without some difference between the underlying neuronal states or processes. The "type" reductionist, on the other hand, assumes more, indeed too much more, since he claims that there can be no mental causes or psychological laws that are not, at bottom, reducible to neuronal causes or neuronal laws. In other words, the "type" reductionist assumes that in the fullness of time every law applying to mental states, every psychologically relevant principle, will be precisely translated into the laws governing neuronal states. As Fodor puts it, according to the "type" physicalist, the more psychology succeeds, the quicker it will disappear. The "token" physicalist, in contrast, requires only that some neuronal mechanism or other – which may possibly be non-law-governed and not very interesting – underlie any mental state, event or process; such mechanisms are expected neither to explain psychological laws, nor to be the law-governed cause of mental states. Token reductionism is quite sufficient, Fodor insists; it conforms with the most respectable scientific ontology, while leaving sufficient autonomy to psychology as an independent science.

Another brand of reductionism cogently rejected by Fodor in *The Language of Thought* is that which searches for mental "primitives" or "precursors". From Locke to Piaget, language acquisition and concept formation have, for purposes of study, been broken down into more basic, simpler units which are then reassembled into larger ones, be they associations of elementary ideas or combinations of sensori-motor schemes. Fodor's virtue is to have shown that not only have all such attempts failed over the centuries, but also that, as a matter of principle, no such strategy could ever succeed. He argues at length that the ultimate representational basis of language and thought must be a "language of thought" or "mentalese", which is, under any adequate description, as complex and differentiated as, say, English or Japanese or the most refined symbolic languages. Nothing less will do. There can be no "reduction" but rather sentences expressed in full-blown natural languages must be mapped into complex corresponding formulae in basic mentalese.

In his 1975 essay, however, Fodor offered further cause for despair, when he showed that in this complex medium of representations and mental computations, each formula or sentence had to have "accessed" not by form alone, but by content as well. This is tantamount to saying, however preposterous it may sound, that all basic concepts must be innate. And this goes not just for primitive concepts such as "leftmost in a row" or "roundish-looking", but for full-blown concepts too. Genuinely richer concepts cannot, as a point of logic, be constructed out of genuinely poorer ones by association, trial-and-error, nesting, embedding or what have you. Either they are already in the basic lexicon of mentalese, or they will never enter it, however complex a process of "learning" one is willing to countenance. This means, as Fodor declares quite candidly, that we have no idea what a theory of concept learning under these specifications must look like. And the situation today is much the same: we still eagerly await some hint of such a theory, however vague. On the other hand, the intervening years have witnessed substantial progress in linguistics and the study of visual imagery and control of movements. Such new fields indicate how basic constructive and functional principles are specific to each mental unit or "module". Deeper knowledge has led to the discovery of an ever-greater specificity, ie modularity.

The Modularity of Mind: An Essay in Faculty Psychology is thus a timely book. If, even before Fodor, cognitive science was already poised to frustrate the hopes of common-sense psychologists, it can now toll their death-knell. In *The Language of Thought* Fodor quoted Brecht to the effect that "the man who laughs at the one who has not yet heard the terrible

news". In his new book he recasts this in explicit psychological terms:

I should like to propose a generalisation, one which I fondly hope will some day come to be known as "Fodor's first law of the Nonexistence of Cognitive Science". It goes like this: the more global a cognitive process is, the less anybody understands it. Very global processes like analogical reasoning aren't understood at all.

If Fodor is right, the laughter will suddenly stop in many quarters of academic psychology and everywhere in folk psychology.

Perhaps we should take comfort in the fact that even terrible news spreads slowly. But however one looks at it, it is undeniably true that everything that is non-trivial and conceptually deep in scientific psychology is "about" some module. Fodor's first law posits this as consequence of a principle. Put simply, there is nothing deep to be discovered about, say, the psychology of creativity, of musical or scientific genius, or even about the mental mechanisms underlying the evolution of beliefs and theories. The central mental processes subservient to these processes are, so to speak, everywhere; hence Fodor's term "isotropic". Fixation of beliefs, problem-solving and the rational scrutiny of theories are all canonical examples of central processes. Since they must draw on information from all the available modules, they are time-consuming and thus require an enormous number of computations. Modular processes, in contrast, are localized, "hard-wired", "informationally encapsulated", "bull-headed". More central than sensory systems and more sophisticated in their design, modules are conversant both with the outermost periphery and with the inner "isotropic" chambers of thought. Neither the sensory periphery nor the central processor, however, can interfere with their automatic processes. Being "bull-headed", modules can only operate according to their own fixed principles. This is precisely why they can be the object of serious scientific study.

The prototypical module, which is now being

investigated at MIT by Fodor and Merrill Garrett, is the language "parser" – shorthand for that set of reflex mechanisms which is able to segment the flow of speech into meaningful units and to assign them a semantic interpretation. Admittedly, if Fodor is right and modules really are the only substance of psychology, such a claim will be very difficult for him to prove. For the most part, neurobiology is currently operating at both ends of the modules: on the peripheral receptor system and on the overall constructive principles of the brain. One can but fear that in this research the only evidence we will have to go on will be introspection and a few measly milliseconds in the reaction-times of subjects to sentences and words flashed on a screen. The risk we face is that much theory and many sweeping generalizations will be built on very indirect evidence – introspective reports, much intuition and some refined psychophysical measurements.

It is the heavy task of cognitive science, but also its challenge, to construct so much out of so little. Fodor knows this very well and even capitalizes on it, fond as he is of quoting the late Lyndon Johnson: "I am the only president you've got." For all its shortcomings, modularity is probably here to stay, as a term, as a theory and as a mentalistic world view.

Representations: Philosophical Essays on the Foundations of Cognitive Science by Jerry A. Fodor, reviewed by Colin McGinn in the TLS on January 29, 1982, has just been published in paperback (343pp. Harvester. £7.95. 0 85527 977 X). Professor Fodor announces in the introduction that he thinks of these collected essays "as much of a kind with false starts, verbal slips, sawing off of limbs that one is sitting on, and other comic inadvertences... where I thought there was an itch, I scratched". At the same time, he observes, they amount to "something that looks a lot like a theory of mind".

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